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LANDOR

BY

SIDNEY COLVIN

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The standard and indispensable authority on the life of Landor is the work of the late Mr. John Forster, viz.:—

1. Forster, John: Walter Savage Landor, a Biography, London, Chapman and Hall; first edition in 2 vols., 1869; second edition, abridged, forming vol. i. of the collected "Life and Works of Walter Savage Landor" in 8 vols., 1876.

Mr. Forster was appointed by Landor himself as his literary executor; he had command of all the necessary materials for his task, and his book is written with knowledge, industry, affection, and loyalty of purpose. But it is cumbrous in comment, inconclusive in criticism, and vague on vital points, especially on points of bibliography, which in the case of Landor are frequently both interesting and obscure. The student of Landor must supplement the work of Mr. Forster from other sources, of which the principal are the following:—

2. Hunt, J. E. Leigh, Lord Byron and his contemporaries. London, 1827.
3. Blessington, Marguerite, Countess of, The Idler in Italy, 2 vols., London, 1839. Lady Blessington's first impressions of Landor are reported in vol. ii. of the above; her correspondence with him, and an Imaginary Conversation by Landor not elsewhere reprinted, will be found in
4. Madden, R. R., The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington, 3 vols. London, 1855.
5. The New Spirit of the Age, edited by R. H. Horne. 2 vols. London, 1844. The article on Landor in vol. i. of the above is by Miss Barrett, afterwards Mrs. Browning, supplemented by the editor.

6. EMERSON, R. W., English Traits. London, 1856.

7. FIELD, Kate, Last Days of Walter Savage Landor, a series of three articles in the Atlantic Monthly Magazine for 1866.

8. ROBINSON, H. Crabbe, Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of, edited by Thomas Sadler, 3 vols. London, 1869.

9. DICKENS, Charles: A short article on Forster's "Biography" in All the Year Round for 1869, supplementing with some striking physiognomic touches the picture of Landor drawn by the same hand in "Bleak House" (see below, p. 176).

10. LINTON, Mrs. E. Lynn: Reminiscences of Walter Savage Landor, in Fraser's Magazine for July, 1870; by far the best account of the period of Landor's life to which it refers.

11. HOUGHTON, Lord: Monographs. London, 1873.

I forbear to enumerate the various articles on Landor and his works which I have consulted in reviews and magazines between the dates 1798 and 1870; several of the most important are mentioned in the text. In addition to the materials which exist in print, I have had the advantage of access to some unpublished. To Mr. Robert Browning in particular my thanks are due for his great kindness in allowing me to make use of the collection of books and manuscripts left him by Landor, including Landor's own annotated copies of some of his rarest writings, and a considerable body of his occasional jottings and correspondence. Mr. Augustus J. C. Hare was also good enough to put into my hands a number of letters written by Landor to his father and to himself. To Lord Houghton I am indebted for help of various kinds, and to Mr. Swinburne for his most friendly pains in looking through the sheets of my work, and for many valuable suggestions and corrections.

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CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE—SCHOOL—COLLEGE.
(1775–1794.)

Few men have ever impressed their peers so much, or the general public so little, as Walter Savage Landor. Of all celebrated authors, he has hitherto been one of the least popular. Nevertheless he is among the most striking figures in the history of English literature; striking alike by his character and his powers. Personally, Landor exercised the spell of genius upon every one who came near him. His gifts, attainments, impetuosities, his originality, his force, his charm, were all of the same conspicuous and imposing kind. Not to know what is to be known of so remarkable a man is evidently to be a loser. Not to be familiar with the works of so noble a writer is to be much more of a loser still.

The place occupied by Landor among English men of letters is a place apart. He wrote on many subjects and in many forms, and was strong both in imagination and in criticism. He was equally master of Latin and English, and equally at home in prose and verse. He cannot

properly be associated with any given school, or indeed with any given epoch, of our literature, as epochs are usually counted, but stands alone, alike by the character of his mind and by the tenour and circumstances of his life. It is not easy to realize that a veteran who survived to receive the homage of Mr. Swinburne, can have been twenty-five years old at the death of Cowper, and forty-nine at the death of Byron. Such, however, was the case of Landor. It is less than seventeen years since he died, and less than eighteen since he published his last book; his first book had been published before Buonaparte was consul. His literary activity extended, to be precise, over a period of sixty-eight years (1795—1863). Neither was his career more remarkable for its duration than for its proud and consistent independence. It was Landor's strength as well as his weakness that he was all his life a law to himself, writing in conformity with no standards and in pursuit of no ideals but his own.

So strong, indeed, was this instinct of originality in Landor that he declines to fall in with the thoughts or to repeat the words of others even when to do so would be most natural. Though an insatiable and retentive reader, in his own writing he does not choose to deal in the friendly and commodious currency of quotation, allusion, and reminiscence. Everything he says must be his own and nothing but his own. On the other hand it is no part of Landor's originality to provoke attention, as many even of illustrious writers have done, by emphasis or singularity of style. Arbitrary and vehement beyond other men in many of his thoughts, in their utterance he is always sober and decorous. He delivers himself of whatever is in his mind with an air, to borrow an expression of his

own, "majestically sedate." Again, although in saying what he chooses to say Landor is one of the clearest and most direct of writers, it is his pleasure to leave much unsaid of that which makes ordinary writing easy and effective. He is so anxious to avoid saying what is superfluous that he does not always say what is necessary. As soon as he has given adequate expression to any idea, he leaves it and passes on to the next, forgetting sometimes to make clear to the reader the connexion of his ideas with one another.

These qualities of unbending originality, of lofty self-control, and of deliberate parsimony in utterance, are evidently not the qualities to carry the world by storm. Neither did Landor expect to carry the world by storm. He wrote less for the sake of pleasing others than himself. He addressed a scanty audience while he lived, but looked forward with confidence to one that should be more numerous in the future, although not very numerous even then. "I shall dine late; but the dining-room will be well-lighted, the guests few and select." In the meantime Landor contented himself with the applause he had, and considering whence that applause came, he had indeed good reason to be content. His early poem of *Gebir* was the delight first of Southey and afterwards of Shelley, who at college used to declaim it with an enthusiasm which disconcerted his friends, and which years did not diminish. The admiration of Southey for Landor's poetry led the way to an ardent and lasting friendship between the two men. By Wordsworth Landor was regarded less warmly than by Southey, yet with a respect which he extended to scarcely any other writer of his time. Hazlitt, who loved Wordsworth little and Southey less, and on whose dearest predilections Landor unsparingly

trampled, nevertheless acknowledged the force of his genius. Charles Lamb was at one time as great a reader and quoter of *Gebir* as Shelley himself, and at another could not dismiss from his mind or lips the simple cadences of one of Landor's elegies. De Quincey declared that his Count Julian was a creation worthy to take rank beside the Prometheus of Æschylus, or Milton's Satan. As the successive volumes of his *Imaginary Conversations* appeared, they seemed to some of the best minds of the time to contain masterpieces almost unprecedented not only of English composition, but of insight, imagery, and reflection. The society of their author was sought and cherished by the most distinguished of his countrymen. The members of the scholar family of Hare, and those of the warrior family of Napier, were among his warmest admirers and closest friends. Coming down to a generation of which the survivors are still with us, Dickens, Carlyle, Emerson, Lord Houghton, Robert and Elizabeth Browning, have been among those who have delighted to honour him; and the list might be brought down so as to include names of all degrees of authority and standing. While the multitude has ignored Landor, he has been for three generations teaching and charming those who in their turn have taught and charmed the multitude.

By his birthplace, as he loved to remember, Landor was a neighbour of the greatest English poets. He was born at Warwick on the 30th of January, 1775. He was proud of his lineage, and fond of collecting evidences of its antiquity. His family had in fact been long one of property and position in Staffordshire. He believed that it had originally borne the name of Del-a La'nd or De la Laundes, and that its descent could be traced back for

seven hundred years; for about half that time, said his less credulous or less imaginative brother. What is certain is that some of the Staffordshire Landors had made themselves heard of in the wars of King and Parliament. A whig Landor had been high sheriff of the county at the Revolution of 1688; his grandson on the other hand was a marked man for his leanings towards the house of Stuart. A son of this Jacobite Landor being head of the family in the latter part of the last century, was at the same time engaged in the practice of medicine at Warwick. This Dr. Landor was Walter Savage Landor's father.

Of Dr. Landor the accounts which have reached us are not sufficient to convey any very definite image. His memory survives only as that of a polished, sociable, agreeable, somewhat choleric gentleman, more accomplished and better educated, as his profession required, than most of those with whom he associated, but otherwise dining, coursing, telling his story and drinking his bottle without particular distinction among the rest. *Lepidus, doctus, liberalis, probus, amicis jucundissimus*—these are the titles selected for his epitaph by his sons Walter and Robert, both of them men exact in weighing words. Dr. Landor was twice married, first to a Miss Wright of Warwick, and after her death to Elizabeth Savage, of the Warwickshire family of the Savages of Tachbrook. By his first wife he had six children, all of whom, however, died in infancy except one daughter. By his second wife he had three sons and four daughters; and of this second family Walter Savage Landor was the eldest born. Both the first and the second wives of Dr. Landor were heiresses in their degree. The fortune of the first devolved by settlement upon her surviving daughter, who was in due time married to a cousin, Humphrey Arden of Longcroft. The family of the second,

that of the Savages of Tachbrook, was of better certified antiquity and distinction than his own, though the proofs by which Walter Savage Landor used to associate with it certain historical personages bearing the same name were of a somewhat shadowy nature. The father of Elizabeth Savage had been lineally the head of his house, but the paternal inheritance which she divided with her three sisters was not considerable, the family estates having passed, it seems, into the hands of two of her grand-uncles, men of business in London. By these there was bequeathed to her, after her marriage with Dr. Landor, property to the value of nearly eighty thousand pounds, consisting of the two estates of Ipsley Court and Tachbrook in Warwickshire, the former on the borders of Worcestershire, the latter close to Leamington, together with a share of the reversionary interest in a third estate—that of Hughenden Manor in Buckinghamshire—of which the name has since become familiar to us from other associations. The Warwickshire properties thus left to Mrs. Landor, as well as Dr. Landor's own family property in Staffordshire, were strictly entailed upon the eldest male issue of the marriage; so that to these united possessions Walter Savage Landor was born heir.

No one, it should seem, ever entered life under happier conditions. To the gifts of breeding and of fortune there were added at his birth the gifts of genius and of strength. But there had been evil godmothers beside the cradle as well as good, and in the composition of this powerful nature pride, anger, and precipitancy had been too treacherously mixed, to the prejudice of a noble intellect and tender heart, and to the disturbance of all his relations with his fellow-men. Of his childhood no minute record has come down to us. It seems to have been marked by neither the pre-

cocities nor the infirmities of genius. Indeed, although in after-life Landor used often to complain of ailments, of serious infirmities he knew little all his days. His mother, whose love for her children was solicitous and prudent rather than passionate or very tender, only once had occasion for anxiety as to the health of her eldest born. This was when he was seized in his twelfth year with a violent attack, not of any childish malady, but of gout; an attack which the boy endured, it is said, with clamorous resentment and impatience; and which never afterwards returned.

He had been sent as a child of only four-and-a-half to a school at Knowle, ten miles from home. Here he stayed five years or more, until he was old enough to go to Rugby. His holidays were spent between his father's professional abode in the town of Warwick, and one or other of the two country houses on the Savage estates, Ipsley Court and Tachbrook. To these homes of his boyhood Landor was accustomed all his life to look back with the most affectionate remembrance. He had a retentive memory for places, and a great love of trees and flowers. The mulberries, cedars, and fig-trees of the Warwick garden, the nut-walk and apricots of Tachbrook, afforded him joys which he never afterwards forgot. Of Warwick he writes, in his seventy-eighth year, that he has just picked up from the gravel walk the two first mulberries that have fallen, a thing he remembers having done just seventy years before: and of Tachbrook, in his seventy-seventh, "Well do I remember it from my third or fourth year; and the red filbert at the top of the garden, and the apricots from the barn wall, and Aunt Nancy cracking the stones for me. If I should ever eat apricots with you again, I shall not now cry for the kernel."

For Ipsley and its encircling stream the pleasantest expression of Landor's affection is contained in some unpublished verses, which may find their place here, although they refer to a later period of his youth.

> I hope in vain to see again
>   Ipsley's peninsular domain.
> In youth 'twas there I used to scare
>   A whirring bird or scampering hare,
> And leave my book within a nook
>   Where alders lean above the brook,
> To walk beyond the third mill-pond,
>   And meet a maiden fair and fond
> Expecting me beneath a tree
>   Of shade for two but not for three.
> Ah! my old yew, far out of view,
>   Why must I bid you both adieu.

This love of trees, flowers, and places went along in the boy with a love of books. He was proficient in school exercises, all except arithmetic, an art which, "according to the method in use," he never suceeded in mastering. At Rugby, where he went at ten, he was soon among the best Latin scholars; and he has recorded his delight over the first purchase of English books he made with his own money; the books in question being Drayton's *Polyolbion* and Baker's *Chronicle*. He tells elsewhere how the writer who first awoke in him the love of poetry was Cowper. He seems from the first to have been a greedy reader, even to the injury of his power of sleep. "I do not remember," he writes among his unpublished jottings, "that I ever slept five hours consecutively, rarely four, even in boyhood. I was much of a reader of nights, and was once flogged for sleeping at the evening lesson, which I had learnt, but having mastered it, I dozed."

This bookish boy was at the same time physically strong and active, though not particularly dexterous.

Dancing, to his own great chagrin, he could never learn, and on horseback his head was too full of thoughts to allow him much to mind his riding. At boxing, cricket, and football, he could hold his own well. But the sport he loved was fishing with a cast-net; at this he was really skilful, and apt in the pursuit to break bounds and get into trouble. One day he was reported for having flung his net over, and victoriously held captive, a farmer who tried to interfere with his pastime; another day, for having extorted a nominal permission to fish where he had no sort of business from a passing butcher who had no sort of authority to give it. A fag, whose unlucky star he had chosen all one afternoon to regard as the cause of his bad sport, remembered all his life Landor's sudden change of demeanour, and his own poignant relief, when the taking of a big fish convinced him that the said star was not unlucky after all. Like many imaginative boys to whose summer musings the pools and shallows of English lowland streams have seemed as full of romance as Eurotas or Scamander, he loved nothing so well as to wander by the brook-side, sometimes with a sporting, but sometimes also with a studious intent. He recalls these pleasures in a retrospective poem of his later years, *On Swift joining Avon near Rugby*.

> In youth how often at thy side I wander'd;
> What golden hours, hours numberless, were squander'd
>   Among thy sedges, while sometimes
>   I meditated native rhymes,
> And sometimes stumbled upon Latian feet;
>   There, where soft mole-built seat
>   Invited me, I noted down
>   What must full surely win the crown;
> But first impatiently vain efforts made
> On broken pencil with a broken blade.

Again, one of the most happily turned of all Landor's Latin poems expresses his regret that his eldest son, born in Italy, will never learn to know and love the English streams which had been the delight of his own youth. And once more, he records how the subject of that most perfect of dramatic dialogues, *Leofric and Godiva*, had first occupied him as a boy. He had written a little poem on the subject as he sat by the square pool at Rugby—"may the peppermint still be growing on the bank in that place!"—and he remembers the immoderate laughter with which his attempt was received by the friend to whom he confided it, and his own earnestness in beseeching that friend not to tell the lads—"so heart-strickenly and desperately was I ashamed."

Landor, it thus appears, had acquired in his earliest school days the power and the habit, which remained with him until almost the hour of his death, of writing verses for his own pleasure both in Latin and English. As regards Latin, he is the one known instance in which the traditional classical education of our schools took full effect, and was carried out to its furthest practical consequences. Not only did Latin become in boyhood and remain to the last a second mother tongue to him; his ideal of behaviour at the same time modelled itself on the ancient Roman, and that not alone in things convenient. Not content with taking Cato or Scipio or Brutus for his examples, when he was offended he instinctively betook himself to the weapons of Catullus and Martial. Now a schoolboy's alcaics and hendecasyllabics may be never so well turned, but if their substance is both coarse and savage, and if moreover they are directed against that schoolboy's master, the result can hardly be to his advantage. And thus it fell out with Landor. He might easily have been

the pride of the school, for whatever were his faults of temper, his brilliant scholarship could not fail to recommend him to his teachers, nor his ready kindness towards the weak, his high spirit and sense of honour to his companions. He was pugnacious, but only against the strong. "You remember," he writes, in some verses addressed seventy years later to an old school companion—

> You remember that I fought
> Never with any but an older lad,
> And never lost but two fights in thirteen.

Neither would it much have stood in Landor's way that his lofty ideas of what was due to himself made him refuse, at school as afterwards, to compete against others for prizes or distinctions of any kind. What did stand in his way was his hot and resentful impatience alike of contradiction and of authority. Each half-holiday of the school was by a customary fiction supposed to be given as a reward for the copy of verses declared to be the best of the day, and with or without reason, Landor conceived that the head master, Dr. James, had systematically grudged this recognition to verses of his. When at last play-day was given for a copy of Landor's, the boy added in transcribing it a rude postscript, to the effect that it was the worst he had ever written. In other controversies that from time to time occurred between master and scholar, there were not wanting kindlier and more humorous passages than this. But at last there arose a quarrel over a Latin quantity, in which Landor was quite right at the outset, but by his impracticable violence put himself hopelessly in the wrong; complicating matters not only with fierce retorts, but with such verses as made authority's very hair stand on end. This was in his sixteenth year, when he was within five of being head of the

school. The upshot was that the head master wrote to Dr. Landor, with many expressions of regret, requesting that his son Walter might be removed, lest he should find himself under the necessity of expelling him as one not only rebellious himself, but a promoter of rebellion in others.

Signs of the same defiant spirit had not been wanting in his home life. The seeds seem to have been already sown of an estrangement, never afterwards altogether healed, between himself and his father. In politics Dr. Landor had been originally a zealous Whig; but he was one of those Whigs for whom the French Revolution was too much. During that crisis he was swept along the stream of alarm and indignation which found both voice and nourishment in the furious eloquence of Burke; and when the party at last broke in two he went with those who deserted Fox and became the fervent followers of Pitt. The boyish politics of young Landor were of a very different stamp. He was already, what he remained to the end of his days, an ardent republican and foe to kings. The French Revolution had little to do with making or unmaking his sentiments on these points. His earliest admiration was for Washington, his earliest and fiercest aversion for George III. And he had no idea of keeping his opinions to himself, but would insist on broaching them, no matter what the place or company. The young rebel one day cried out in his mother's room that he wished the French would invade England, and assist us in hanging George the Third between two such rascals as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; whereupon that excellent lady was seen to rise, box his ears from behind his chair, and then hastily make off upon her high-heeled shoes for fear of consequences. Again, we hear of his fling-

ing an impetuous taunt across the table at a bishop who was dining with his father, and who had spoken slightingly of the scholarship of Porson. Nevertheless it must not be supposed that Landor, even in the rawest and most combative days of his youth, was at any time merely ill-conditioned in his behaviour. He was never without friends in whom the signs both of power and tenderness which broke through his unruly ways inspired the warmest interest and affection. Such friends included at this time the most promising of his schoolmates, more than one charming girl companion of his own family or their acquaintances, and several seniors of various orders and conditions. His principal school friends were Henry Cary, afterwards translator of Dante, and Walter Birch, an accomplished scholar who became an Oxford tutor and ended his days at a country living in Essex. Girls of his own age or older found something attractive in the proud and stubborn boy, who for all his awkwardness and headlong temper was chivalrous to them, could turn the prettiest verses, and no doubt even in speech showed already some rudiments of that genius for the art of compliment which distinguished him beyond all men in later life. Thus we find him towards his twentieth year in the habit of receiving from Dorothea Lyttelton, the beautiful orphan heiress of estates contiguous to his home, advice conveyed in terms betokening the closest intimacy and kindness. Among his elders he attached to himself as friends characters so opposite as "the elegant and generous Dr. Sleath," one of his Rugby masters, with whom he was never on any but the kindest terms; Mr. Parkhurst of Ripple, a country squire and father of one of his schoolmates; and the famous Dr. Parr, at that time and for many years perpetual curate of Hatton near Warwick. This

singular personage, in spite of many grotesque pomposities of speech, and some of character, commanded respect alike by his learning and his love of liberty. He was a pillar of advanced Whig opinions, and a friend of most of the chief men of that party. To the study where Parr lived ensconced with his legendary wig and pipe, and whence, in the lisping utterance that suited so quaintly with his sesquipedalian vocabulary, he fulminated against Pitt and laid down the law on Latin from amid piles of books and clouds of tobacco-smoke, the young Landor was wont to resort in search of company more congenial than that of the orthodox clergy and lawyers who frequented his father's house.

In speaking of these friendships of Landor's youth we have somewhat anticipated the order of events. To return to the date of his removal from Rugby; he was next placed under the charge of a Dr. Langley, at the village, celebrated for the charms of its scenery, of Ashbourne in Derbyshire. Here again he showed how strong an attachment he was capable of inspiring in, and returning towards, a gentle and friendly senior. In his dialogue of Izaak Walton, Cotton, and Oldways, Dr. Langley is immortalized in the character of the "good parson of Ashbourne;" "he wants nothing, yet he keeps the grammar school, and is ready to receive as private tutor any young gentleman in preparation for Oxford or Cambridge, but only one. They live like princes, converse like friends, and part like lovers." In a note to the same dialogue, as well as several times elsewhere, Landor explicitly declares his gratitude for the "parental kindness" of Dr. Langley and his wife, as also that which he bore all his life to two others of his teachers, the above mentioned Dr. Sleath at Rugby, and "the saintly Benwell" at Oxford.

In this kind household Landor passed nearly two years. In Latin it appears that he had not much to learn from the good vicar, but he turned his time to account in reading the Greek writers, especially Sophocles and Pindar; in translating some of Buchanan into English, and some of Cowley into Latin, verse, besides other poetical efforts in both languages. His English verses at this time show him not yet emancipated from the established precedents of the eighteenth century. It is not until a year or two later that we find him abandoning, in narrative poetry, the trim monotony of the rhyming couplet for a blank verse of more massive structure and statelier march than any which had been written since Milton.

At eighteen Landor left Ashbourne and went into residence at Trinity College, Oxford. His abilities made their impression at the university in spite of himself; but he still would not be persuaded to compete for any sort of distinction. "I showed my compositions to Birch of Magdalen, my old friend at Rugby, and to Cary, translator of Dante, and to none else." Landor's reputation for talents which he would not put forth was accompanied by a reputation for opinions which he would not conceal. The agitation of political parties was at its height. The latter course of the Revolution had alienated the majority even of those who had sympathized with it at first, and the few Englishmen who did not share the general horror were marked men. Among those few there were at Oxford in these days two undergraduates, Southey of Balliol, and Landor of Trinity. The two were not known to each other until afterwards, but they both made themselves conspicuous by appearing in hall and elsewhere with their hair unpowdered, a fashion which about 1793-1794 was a direct advertisement

of revolutionary sentiments. "Take care," said Landor's tutor to him; "they will stone you for a republican." No such consequences in fact resulted, but Landor became notorious in the University. He was known not only as a Jacobin, but as a "mad Jacobin." "His Jacobinism," says Southey, looking back to his own feelings in those days, "would have made me seek his acquaintance, but for his madness." The impression thus left on Southey's mind was probably due less to the warmth of Landor's revolutionary sentiments and language, than to the notoriety of the freak which before long brought him for the second time into violent and futile collision with authority. One evening he invited his friends to wine. He had been out shooting in the morning, and had his gun, powder, and shot in the next room. Opposite were the rooms of a Tory undergraduate, "a man," according to Landor's account, "universally laughed at and despised; and it unfortunately happened that he had a party on the same day, consisting of servitors and other raffs of every description." The two parties began exchanging taunts; then those opposite closed the shutters, which being on the outside, Landor proposed by way of a practical joke to send a charge of shot into them. His friends applauded, and he fired. The owner of the shutters naturally complained, and an inquiry was instituted to ascertain who was the offender. Landor's defiant mood at this point played him an ill turn, in that it prompted him, instead of frankly stating the facts, to refuse all information. Part of his motive in this course, as he himself afterwards explained, was his unwillingness to add to the causes of displeasure which he was conscious of having already given to his father. He could not have followed a more injudicious course. The president was

compelled to push the inquiry and to inflict punishment. This he seems to have done as leniently and considerately as possible; and when sentence of rustication was pronounced it was with the expressed hope, on the part of all the college authorities but one, that its victim would soon return to do them honour. Strangely enough, it seems also to have been hoped that a return to his home would bring about a better understanding between young Landor and his father. But so far from this being the case, his bearing after the freak, more even than the freak itself, together with his subsequent step of giving up his college rooms, exasperated Dr. Landor; passionate words were exchanged; and the son turned his back on his father's house, as he declared and believed, "for ever."

CHAPTER II.

EXPERIMENTS IN LIFE AND POETRY—GEBIR.

(1794–1804.)

FROM Warwick Landor went at first to London, where he took a lodging in Beaumont Street, Portland Place. Here he worked hard for several months at French and Italian, having formed the design of leaving England and taking up his abode in Italy. His Italian studies made him an ardent admirer of Alfieri, whom he always afterwards counted it an event to have met once at this time in a bookseller's shop. During these months he also brought out his first book, "The Poems of Walter Savage Landor; printed for T. Cadell, jun. and W. Davies (successors to John Cadell) in the Strand, 1795." This small volume is now very rare, having been, like several of Landor's writings, withdrawn from sale by its author within a few weeks of publication. It contained a number of poems and epigrams in English, besides a collection of Latin verses and a prose *Defensio* vindicating the use of that language by the moderns. The principal English pieces are a poem in three cantos on the *Birth of Poesy*, an *Apology for Satire*, a tale of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, imitated from Ovid, an *Epistle* of Abélard to Eloisa, all in the rhymed heroic couplet, an ode *To Washington* in the style of Gray, and a short poem in the

metre since made popular by *In Memoriam*, called *French Villagers*. Landor already shows indications of a manner more vigorous and personal than that of the current poetry of the day, but in diction as well as in the choice of metrical forms he is still under the rule of eighteenth century conventions, and writes of nymphs and swains, Bellona and the Zephyrs. At Oxford, where the rumour of his talents and the notoriety of his escapade were still fresh, his little volume seems to have made an impression, and to have been in demand as long as it remained in circulation. Another literary venture made by Landor during these months in London did not, like the last, bear his name. This was a satire against Pitt, in the form of a *Moral Epistle* in heroic verse, addressed to Earl Stanhope, with a prose preface in which the republican poet condoles with the republican peer on his possession of hereditary honours.

While the young Landor was thus engaged with poetry and politics in London, the good offices of friends, and foremost among them of the fair Dorothea Lyttelton and her uncles, had been employed in seeking to reconcile him with his family. Several propositions as to his future mode of life were successively made and dropped; one being that he should be offered a commission then vacant in the Warwickshire Militia. This scheme, however, never came to Landor's knowledge, having fallen to the ground when it was ascertained that the other gentlemen of the corps would resign rather than serve with a comrade of his opinions. The arrangement ultimately made was that he should receive an allowance of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, and be free to live as he liked, it being understood that the idea of a retreat to Italy was given up, and that he was welcome to free quarters at his father's

house whenever he pleased. If this allowance seems small, it must be remembered that Dr. Landor's family property in Staffordshire was worth something under a thousand pounds a year; while there were six younger children for whom Mrs. Landor, her estates being strictly entailed upon her eldest son, held herself bound to make provision out of her income during her life. To her careful and impartial justice towards all her children there exists abundant testimony, including that of Walter himself, whose feelings towards his mother were at all times those of unclouded gratitude and affection.

Matters having been thus arranged, Landor left London, and, with the exception of occasional visits to his family, led during the next three years a life of seclusion in South Wales. He took up his residence on the coast, of which the natural charms were not then defiled as they are now by the agglomerations and exhalations of the mining and smelting industries. Having his headquarters generally at Swansea, sometimes at Tenby, and sometimes taking excursions into remoter parts of the Principality, he filled the chief part of his time with strenuous reading and meditation. His reminiscences of the occupations of these days are preserved in sundry passages both of prose and rhyme. Thus, contrasting the tenour of his own youth with that of Moore's,—

> Alone I spent my earlier hour,
> While thou wert in the roseate bower,
> And raised to thee was every eye,
> And every song won every sigh.
> One servant and one chest of books
> Follow'd me into mountain nooks
> Where shelter'd from the sun and breeze
> Lay Pindar and Thucydides.

Among all the ancient and modern writers whom Landor read and pondered at this time, those who had most share in forming his mind seem to have been Pindar and Milton. What he admired, he says, in Pindar, was his "proud complacency and scornful strength. If I could resemble him in nothing else, I was resolved to be as compendious and as exclusive." But the strongest spell was that laid upon him by Milton, for whom alike as a poet, hero, and republican seer and prophet, he now first conceived the enthusiastic reverence which afterwards inspired some of his noblest writing. "My prejudices in favour of ancient literature began to wear away on reading *Paradise Lost*, and even the great hexameter sounded to me tinkling when I had recited aloud, in my solitary walks on the sea-shore, the haughty appeal of Satan and the repentance of Eve." Here, from a letter written long after to Lady Blessington, is another retrospective glimpse of his life in those days. "I lived," he writes, "chiefly among woods, which are now killed with copper works, and took my walks over sandy sea-coast deserts, then covered with low roses and thousands of nameless flowers and plants, trodden by the naked feet of the Welsh peasantry, and trackless. These creatures were somewhat between me and the animals, and were as useful to the landscape as masses of weed or stranded boats." Never were his spirits better, he writes in the same connexion, although he did not exchange twelve sentences with men.

It is clear that Landor here exaggerates in some degree the loneliness of his life. If he did not exchange twelve sentences with men, he at all events found occasion for more extended parley with the other sex. He was in fact by no means as much a stranger to the roseate bower as

the verses above quoted might lead us to suppose. These days of solitary rambles and high communings, "Studies intense of strong and stern delight,"—the line is his own —were also to Landor days of romance. The earliest heroine of his devotions during his life in Wales was called in the language of poetry Ionè, and in that of daily life Jones. To her succeeded, but without, it would seem, altogether supplanting her, a second and far more serious flame. This was a blithe Irish lady, who conceived a devoted passion for the haughty and studious youth, and whom her poet called Ianthè. Ianthè stands for Jane, and the full name of the lady was Sophia Jane Swift; afterwards Countess de Molandé. I find the history of these names Ionè and Ianthè, which fill so considerable a place in Landor's early poetry, set down as follows in one of those autobiographical jottings in verse which he did not think it worth while to publish, but which are characteristic as illustrating his energetic and deliberate way of turning trifles into verse:—

Sometimes, as boys will do, I play'd at love,
Nor fear'd cold weather, nor withdrew in hot;
And two who were my playmates at that hour,
Hearing me call'd a poet, in some doubt
Challenged me to adapt their names to song.
Ionè was the first; her name is heard
Among the hills of Cambria, north and south,
But there of shorter stature, like herself;
I placed a comely vowel at its close,
And drove an ugly sibilant away.

* * * * *

Ianthè, who came later, smiled and said,
I have two names and will be praised in both;
Sophia is not quite enough for me,
And you have simply named it, and but once.
Now call the other up—

* * * * *

I went, and planted in a fresh parterre
Ianthè; it was blooming, when a youth
Leapt o'er the hedge, and snatching at the stem
Broke off the label from my favourite flower,
And stuck it on a sorrier of his own.

The sally in the last lines is curious. Both Shelley and Byron have made English readers familiar with the name Ianthè. So far as I can learn, it had not appeared in English poetry at all until it was introduced by Landor, except in Dryden's translation of the story of Iphis and Ianthè from Ovid. It was in 1813 that both Byron chose it as a fancy name for Lady Ann Harley, in the dedication of Childe Harold, and Shelley as a real name to be given to his infant daughter. The "youth" of the above extract can hardly be any other than Byron, whom Landor neither liked nor much admired, and whom he considered, as we thus perceive, to have borrowed this beautiful name Ianthè from his own early poetry.

Upon the whole the life led by Landor at twenty, and for the years next following, was one well suited to the training of a poet. He nourished his mind resolutely upon the noblest sustenance, making his own all that was best in the literatures of ancient and modern Europe; except, indeed, in the literature of Germany, which had been then barely discovered in England by a few explorers like Scott, Coleridge, and William Taylor of Norwich, and to which Landor neither now nor afterwards felt himself attracted. He haunted, moreover, with the keenest enjoyment of its scenery, a region hardly less romantic or less impressive than that which was inspiring at the same time the youth of Wordsworth. If he was inclined to trifle with the most serious of things, love, that is a fault by which the quality of a man's life suffers, but not necessarily the quality of his song; and

experiences both more transient and more reckless than his have made of a Burns or a Heine the exponents of the passion for all generations.

Landor, however, was not destined to be one of the master poets either of nature, like Wordsworth, or of passion, like Burns or Heine. All his life he gave proof, in poetry, of remarkable and versatile capacity, but of no overmastering vocation. So little sure, indeed, in youth was he of his own vocation, that his first important poem, *Gebir*, was suggested by an accident and prefaced with an apology. The history of *Gebir* is this: Landor had made friends at Tenby with the family of Lord Aylmer, and one of the young ladies of that family, his especial and close friend Rose Aylmer, lent him a history of romance by one Clara Reeve. At the end of this book he found a sketch of a tale, nominally Arabian, which struck his imagination as having in it something of a shadowy, antique grandeur—*magnificum quid sub crepusculo antiquitatis*, as he afterwards defined the quality—and out of which he presently constructed the following story. Gebir (whence Gibraltar) a prince of Spain, in fulfilment of a vow binding him to avenge hereditary wrongs, makes war against Charoba, a young queen of Egypt. Charoba seeks counsel of her nurse, the sorceress Dalica, who devises succour through her magic arts. An interview next takes place between Charoba and the invader, when their enmity changes into mutual love. Gebir hereupon directs his army to restore and colonize a ruined city which had been founded in the country of Charoba by one of his ancestors; and the work is begun and carried on until it is suddenly undone by magic. Meanwhile the brother of Gebir, Tamar, a shepherd-prince, whose task it is to tend the flocks of the

invading host, has in his turn fallen in love with an ocean nymph, who had encountered and beaten him in wrestling. Gebir persuades Tamar to let *him* try a fall with the nymph, and throwing her, learns from her, first promising that she shall have the hand of Tamar for her reward, the rites to be performed in order that his city may rise unimpeded. In the fulfilment of these rites Gebir visits the under-world, and beholds the shades of his ancestors. After his return it is agreed that he shall be wedded to Charoba. Tamar also and his nymph are to be united; their marriage takes place first, and the nymph, warning her husband of calamities about to befall in Egypt, persuades him to depart with her, and after leading him in review past all the shores of the Mediterranean, unfolds to him a vision of the glory awaiting his descendants in the lands between the Rhine and the Garonne. Then follows the marriage of Gebir and Charoba, which they and their respective hosts intend to be the seal of a great reconciliation. But, inasmuch as "women communicate their fears more willingly than their love," Charoba has never avowed her change of heart to Dalica, who believes the marriage to be only a stratagem devised by the queen to get Gebir within her power. Accordingly she gives the bridegroom, to put on during the ceremony, a poisoned garment which she has obtained from her sister, a sorceress stronger than herself. The poison takes effect, and the poem ends with the death of Gebir in the arms of the despairing Charoba, and in view of the assembled hosts.

Such is the plot, shadowy in truth and somewhat chaotic, of Landor's first considerable poem. In his preface he declares the work to be "the fruit of Idleness and Ignorance; for had I been a botanist or a mineralogist, it

had never been written." We ought, however, to qualify these careless words of the preface, by remembering those of the poem itself, in which he invokes the spirit of Shakspeare, and tells how—

> —— panting in the play-hour of my youth,
> I drank of Avon, too, a dangerous draught
> That roused within the feverish thirst of song.

Having determined to write *Gebir*, Landor hesitated for some time whether to do so in Latin or in English, and had even composed some portions in the former language before he finally decided in favour of the latter. And then, when he had written his first draft of the poem in English, he lost the manuscript, and only recovered it after a considerable time. Here is his account of the matter as he recollected it in old age,—

> Sixty the years since Fidler bore
> My grouse-bag up the Bala moor;
> Above the lakes, along the lea,
> Where gleams the darkly yellow Dee;
> Through crags, o'er cliffs, I carried there
> My verses with paternal care,
> But left them, and went home again
> To wing the birds upon the plain.
> With heavier luggage half forgot,
> For many months they follow'd not.
> When over Tawey's sands they came,
> Brighter flew up my winter flame,
> And each old cricket sang alert
> With joy that they had come unhurt.

When he had recovered the manuscript of his poem, Landor next proceeded to condense it. He cuts out, he tells us, nearly half of what he had written. The poem as so abridged is, for its length, probably the most "compendious and exclusive" which exists. The narrative is packed into a space where it has no room to develope itself

at ease. The transitions from one theme to another are effected with more than Pindaric abruptness, and the difficulty of the poem is further increased by the occurrence of grammatical constructions borrowed from the Latin, and scarcely intelligible to those ignorant of that language. It is only after considerable study that the reader succeeds in taking in *Gebir* as a whole, however much he may from the first be impressed by the power of particular passages. Next to the abruptness and the condensation of *Gebir*, its most striking qualities are breadth and vividness of imagination. Taken severally, and without regard to their sequence and connexion, these colossal figures and supernatural actions are presented with masterly reality and force. As regards style and language, Landor shows that he has not been studying the great masters in vain. He has discarded Bellona and the Zephyrs, and calls things by their proper names, admitting no heightening of language that is not the natural expression of heightened thought. For loftiness of thought and language together, there are passages in *Gebir* that will bear comparison with Milton. There are lines too that for majesty of rhythm will bear the same comparison; but majestic as Landor's blank verse often is, it is always too regular; it exhibits none of the Miltonic variety, none of the inventions in violation or suspension of ordinary metrical law, by which that great master draws unexampled tones from his instrument.

Here, indeed, was a contrast to the fashionable poetry of the hour, to the dulcet inanities of Hayley and of Miss Seward. *Gebir* appeared just at the mid point of time between the complaint of Blake concerning the truancy of the Muses from England,

The languid strings do scarcely move,
The sound is forced, the notes are few,

and the thanksgiving of Keats,

——— fine sounds are floating wild
About the earth.

Of the fine sounds that heralded to modern ears the revival of English poetry, *Gebir* will always remain for students one of the most distinctive. The *Lyrical Ballads*, the joint venture of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which appeared in the same year as *Gebir*, began with the *Ancient Mariner*, a work of even more vivid and haunting, if also more unearthly, imagery, and ended with the *Lines written on revisiting Tintern Abbey*, which conveyed the first notes of a far deeper spiritual message. But nowhere in the works of Wordsworth or Coleridge do we find anything resembling Landor's peculiar qualities of haughty splendour and massive concentration. The message, such as it is, of *Gebir* is mainly political and philanthropic. The tragic end of the hero and his bride is designed to point a moral against the enterprises of hatred and ambition, the happy fates of Tamar and the nymph to illustrate the reward that awaits the peaceful. The progeny whom the latter pair see in a vision celebrating the triumphs of liberty are intended to symbolize the people of revolutionary France. The passage describing their festivity, cancelled in subsequent editions, is one of the best in the original poem, and its concluding image may serve to illustrate both the style and the versification of *Gebir* at least as well as other passages more commonly quoted, like the shell, the meeting of the prince and Charoba, or the bath of Charoba.

> What hoary form so vigorous vast bends here?
> Time, Time himself throws off his motley garb,
> Figured with monstrous men and monstrous gods,
> And in pure vesture enters their pure fanes,
> A proud partaker of their festivals.
> Captivity led captive, war o'erthrown,
> They shall o'er Europe, shall o'er earth extend
> Empire that seas alone and skies confine,
> And glory that shall strike the crystal stars.

In the same spirit Buonaparte is included among the descendants of Tamar, and his birth foreshadowed as that of

> A mortal man above all mortal praise;

On the other hand George III. is introduced, with a lordly neglect of the considerations of time and space, among the ancestors of Gebir suffering the penalty of their crimes in the nether regions. "Aroar," cries the prince to his guide,

> Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? What wretch
> Is that with eyebrows white, and slanting brow?

(In conversation, it may be mentioned, Landor had another formula for expressing his aversion for the physical appearance of his sovereign. He had only seen him once, and "his eyes," he was accustomed to say, "his eyes looked as if they had been cut out of a vulture's gizzard.") In taking leave of *Gebir*, let us only note farther the personal allusions which it contains in two passages to Landor's relations with his Ionè. One is a direct apostrophe in which he celebrates her beauties; her cheeks, her temples, her lips, her eyes, her throat, which he calls love's column

> Marmoreal, trophied round with golden hair.

In the other passage she is introduced among the choir of nymphs attendant upon the bride of Tamar:—

> Scarce the sweet-flowing music he imbibes,
> Or sees the peopled Ocean; scarce he sees
> Spio with sparkling eyes, or Beroè
> Demure, and young Ionè, less renown'd,
> Not less divine, mild-natured, Beauty form'd
> Her face, her heart Fidelity; for gods
> Design'd, a mortal, too, Ionè loved.

Landor was at all times sensible enough of the difference between his own marble and other men's stucco; and he expected great things of *Gebir*. At the same time, he published it in the manner least likely to ensure success, that is anonymously, and in pamphlet shape, through a local publisher at Warwick. Considering the reception given twenty years afterwards to the poetry of Keats and Shelley, it is no wonder that *Gebir* was neglected. The poem found indeed one admirer, and that was Southey, who read it with enthusiasm, recommended it in speech and writing to his friends, Cobbe, William Taylor, Grosvenor Bedford, the Hebers, and in the year following its publication (1799) called public attention to it in the pages of the *Critical Review.* Another distinguished admirer, of some years later date, was De Quincey, who was accustomed to profess, although Landor scouted the profession, that he also had for some time "conceited himself" to be the sole purchaser and appreciater of *Gebir.* Southey's praise in the *Critical Review* was soon balanced by a disparaging article in the *Monthly*, in which the anonymous author was charged, among other things, with having too closely imitated Milton. To this Landor prepared a reply, written, to judge by the specimens given in Forster's *Life*, in just the same solid, masculine, clenching style with which we are familiar in

his later prose, but withheld from publication in deference to the judicious advice of a friend.

Whether the scant success of his poem really had anything to do with the restlessness of Landor's life and the desultoriness of his efforts during the next few years, we can hardly tell. He says himself, in his lofty way, that if even foolish men had cared for *Gebir*, he should have continued to apply himself to poetry, since "there is something of summer in the hum of insects." As it was he allowed himself to drift. He began to diversify his exile with frequent and prolonged visits to Bath, London, Brighton. He tried his powers fitfully in many directions. Dr. Parr was eager to enlist his young friend in the ranks of Whig journalism, and persuaded him to place himself in relations with Robert Adair, the right-hand man in these matters of Charles James Fox; under whose guidance Landor became for a while a frequenter of the reporter's gallery, a contributor to the *Courier*, and a butt for the attacks of the *Anti-Jacobin*. In scorn and denunciation of "the Execrable," that is to say of Pitt and of his policy, Landor could be trusted not to fail; but in support of Fox and his, it was unsafe to count upon him too far. He was not, indeed, of the stuff of which practically effective political writers are made. While he despised party watchwords and party men, his temperament was not dispassionate enough for wise neutrality. His political writings, as we shall see, testify to a staunch and high devotion to the great principles of freedom and of justice, as well as to a just observation of many of the broad facts of politics and society. But in dealing with individual problems and persons Landor knows no measure, and is capable neither of allowance nor abatement. In his eyes all champions of liberty are

for the time being spotless heroes; nearly all kings, tyrants to be removed by the dagger or the rope; and with a few shining exceptions, most practical politicians knaves and fools.

How long Landor's connexion with the *Courier* lasted does not appear; but it was at any rate not terminated till the resignation of Pitt, and the formation of the Addington Ministry in 1801. This event exasperated the Whig party, and especially Parr, whose correspondence with Landor at this time consists of pompous and elaborate diatribes, the substance of which he entreats his young friend to recast for publication in the party sheet. Then ensued the peace of Lunéville; and in the next year, 1802, the peace of Amiens. Landor, like all the world, took the opportunity to visit Paris; but like himself, declined to accept introductions or to pay any kind of personal homage to the victorious Consul or to his ministers. His, at least, was not one among the feeble heads, to slavery prone, upon which Wordsworth poured scorn on the same occasion. Landor travelled alone, made his own observations on the people and the country; witnessed, from the illuminated garden of the Tuileries, the young conqueror's reception by the multitude when he appeared at the window of the palace, and contrived, in the great review afterwards, to get a place within a few feet of him as he rode by. Of all this Landor wrote fully and unaffectedly at the time in letters, which have been preserved, to his sisters and brothers. Here, written ten years afterwards, and coloured by a certain measure of deliberate and in truth somewhat over-magniloquent rhetoric, is his account of the reflexions to which another incident of his Paris trip gave rise; I mean his visit to the spoils of art there collected in

the Louvre from the churches and galleries of Italy and of all Europe. "I went," he says "with impatient haste to behold these wonders of their age and of all ages succeeding, but no sooner had I ascended a few steps leading to them than I leaned back involuntarily against the balusters, and my mind was overshadowed and almost overpowered by these reflections. Has then the stupidity of men who could not, in the whole course of their existence, have given birth to anything equal to the smallest of the works above, been the cause of their removal from the country of those who produced them! Kings, whose fatuity would have befitted them better to drive a herd of swine than to direct the energies of a nation! Well, well! I will lose for a moment the memory of their works in contemplating those of greater men."

The events of the last five years had had no more effect than those of the five preceding them in modifying the essential points of Landor's political creed. The portents of the Directory and Consulate had no more been able than the orgies of the Terror to disgust him with republicanism or to reconcile him to monarchy. He had shared, indeed, the chagrin and reprobation with which all friends of liberty looked on the subversion by revolutionary France, now that she was transformed into a conquering power, of ancient liberties outside her borders. But it was France only, and not the Revolution, that Landor held guilty. He had by this time conceived for that country and its inhabitants an aversion in which he never afterwards wavered. "A scoundrel of a Frenchman—tautology *quantum* scoundrel—did so and so," he wrote once to Hare, and the words convey his sentiments on the subject in a nutshell. The French are for him henceforward the most

ferocious, the most inconstant, the most ungovernable of human beings. "As to the cause of liberty," he writes from Paris to his brother in 1802, "this cursed nation has ruined it for ever." The fault in his eyes is not nearly so much that of their new master as their own. Buonaparte is indeed no longer for Landor the mortal man above all mortal praise of *Gebir*, any more than the French people are the peaceful progeny of Tamar; but he is the best ruler for such a race. "Doubtless the government of Buonaparte is the best that can be contrived for Frenchmen. Monkeys must be chained, though it may cost them some grimaces." And again, reiterating the same idea more gravely ten years afterwards, Landor writes:— "No people is so incapable of governing itself as the French, and no government is so proper for it as a despotic and a military one. A nation more restless and rapacious than any horde in Tartary can be controlled only by a Ghenghiz Khan. . . . Their emperor has acted towards them with perfect wisdom, and will leave to some future Machiavelli, if Europe should again see so consummate a politician, a name which may be added to Agathocles and Cæsar Borgia. He has amused himself with a display of every character from Masaniello up to Charlemagne, but in all his pranks and vagaries he has kept one foot upon Frenchmen."

This whimsical energy of dislike extends from the political to the private characteristics of the French; to their looks, their voices and manners, and even to the scenery and climate of their country. "Of all the coasts," it is declared in one of his dialogues, "of all the coasts in the universe, of the same extent, those of France for nearly their totality in three seas are the least beautiful and the least interesting." "The children, the dogs the

frogs, are more clamorous than ours; the cocks are shriller." The language of the French, as a language, Landor also thinks deplorable, but he is too good a judge of letters to extend his contempt to their writings. He was solidly and familiarly versed in the great French writers from Montaigne and Rabelais down, and though he did scant justice to Voltaire, and saw the weakness rather than the strength of the French poetical drama, he thought many of their prose writers second only, if second at all, to the best of antiquity. The style of Rousseau in particular he thought incomparable. He held also in high admiration the great French oratorical divines, and felt and valued to the full the combined pregnancy and simplicity of thought and utterance which distinguish those two pre-eminent classics in verse and prose respectively, La Fontaine and Pascal. "Do we find in Pascal anything of the lying, gasconading, vapouring Frenchman? On the contrary, we find, in despite of the most miserable language, all the sober and retired graces of style, all the confident ease of manliness and strength, with an honest but not abrupt simplicity which appeals to the reason, but is also admitted to the heart."

To return to the history of Landor's occupations, in 1800 he had published, in the shape of an unbound quarto pamphlet of fourteen pages, a collection of short "Poems from the Arabic and Persian," written in irregular unrhymed verses, principally anapæstic. An autograph note added in old age to his own copy says—"I wrote these poems after reading what had been translated from the Arabic and Persian by Sir W. Jones and Dr. Nott." In his preface Landor professes to have followed a French version of the originals, but neither such version nor such originals are known to exist;

and it may be safely inferred that both the statement of the preface and the elaborate notes appended to each poem are so much mystification. The pamphlet is of extreme rarity, and its contents were not reprinted until 1858. I give by way of example the following characteristic and taking little piece with which it concludes:—

> Oh Rahdi, where is happiness?
> Look from your arcade, the sun rises from Busrah;
> Go thither, it rises from Ispahan.
> Alas, it rises neither from Ispahan nor Busrah,
> But from an ocean impenetrable to the diver.
> Oh, Rahdi, the sun is happiness.

To which Landor adds a note to say that "this poem resembles not those ridiculous quibbles which the English in particular call epigrams, but rather, abating some little for *Orientalism*, those exquisite *Eidyllia*, those carvings as it were on ivory or on gems, which are modestly called epigrams by the Greeks."

This little publication, as was natural from its shape and and character, attracted no attention, nor did Landor attempt anything in the same manner afterwards. Two years later, immediately before his expedition to Paris in 1802, he put forth another small volume under the title of "Poetry, by the author of Gebir." This contains two short narrative poems in blank verse—*Chrysaor* and the *Phocæans*, besides a few miscellaneous lyrics in Latin and English. Landor's mind was still occupied with the mythic past of Baetic Spain; and *Chrysaor* is an episode of the war between Gods and Titans, in which Gades, Cadiz, is severed from the mainland by Neptune at the request of Jove. Both in subject and in treatment it seems to foreshadow the *Hyperion* of Keats, except that the manner of the elder poet is more massive, more

concentrated, and proportionately less lucid than that of the younger. To my mind *Chrysaor* is Landor's finest piece of narrative writing in blank verse; less monotonous in its movement than *Gebir*, more lofty and impassioned than any of the later "Hellenics" with which it was afterwards incorporated. At the time of its publication this poem made a deep impression upon Wordsworth.[1] The *Phocæans*, on the other hand, which tells of the foundation of the colony of Massilia by emigrants of that race, a subject which had been in Landor's mind since Oxford days, is so fragmentary and so obscure as to baffle the most tenacious student. It contains, like all Landor's early poetry, images both condensed and vivid, as well as weighty reflections weightily expressed; but in its sequence and incidents the poem is, to me at least, unintelligible. So at the time it seems to have been found by Southey, who hastened to review this new publication by the unknown object of his previous enthusiasm, but could find little to say in its praise.

Another task which occupied Landor at this time was the re-editing of *Gebir*, in conjunction with his brother Robert, then at Oxford. In order to make the poem more popular, the brothers reprinted it with arguments and notes; some of the latter being intended to clear up difficulties, others to modify points concerning which, as for instance, the character of Buonaparte, the author had changed his mind. At the same time they published separately a Latin translation, which, together with a

[1] In the final collected edition of Landor's writings (1876), *Chrysaor* is inadvertently printed as part of the same poem with *Regeneration*, which was written twenty years later, and with which it has nothing at all to do.

scholarly and vigorous preface in the same language, Walter had prepared expressly at Robert's instigation by way of helping the piece into popularity. These, it must be remembered, were the days of Vincent Bourne, Bobus Smith, Frere, Canning, and Wellesley, when the art of Latin versification was studied, practised, and enjoyed not in scholastic circles alone, but by a select public of the most distinguished Englishmen; so that there was not quite so much either of pedantry or of simplicity in the fraternal enterprise as appeared at first sight.

At the end of the volume of "Poetry" published in 1802 there had already appeared one or two lyrics referring, though not yet under that name, to the lady whom Landor afterwards called Ianthè. More were appended, and this time with the name, to yet another experimental scrap of a volume in verse, having for its chief feature a tale in eight-syllable rhyme called *Gunlaug and Helga*, suggested by Herbert's translation from the Icelandic. This appeared in 1804 or 1805, while Robert Landor was still at Oxford, and by him, if by no one else, was dutifully reviewed in a periodical of his own creation, the *Oxford Review*. From these years, about 1802—1806, dates the chief part of Landor's verses written to or about Ianthè. Whether in the form of praise, of complaint, or of appeal, these verses are for the most part general in their terms, and do not enable us definitely to retrace the course of an attachment on which Landor never ceased to look back as the strongest of his life, and for the object of which he continued until her death to entertain the most chivalrous and tender friendship. Landor's verses in this class, although not in the first rank of love-poetry, nevertheless express much contained passion in their grave, concise way, and

seldom fail to include, within the polished shell of verse, a solid and appropriate kernel, however minute, of thought. Here, in a somewhat depressed and ominous key, is a good example of the style:—

I held her hand, the pledge of bliss,
  Her hand that trembled and withdrew,
She bent her head before my kiss—
  My heart was sure that hers was true.

Now I have told her I must part,
  She shakes my hand, she bids adieu,
Nor shuns the kiss—alas, my heart!
  Hers never was the heart for you.

In other pieces we get a more outspoken tale of past delights and of the pain of present separation. The lady went abroad, and the restlessness of Landor's life increased. He moved frequently between Wales, Bath, Clifton, Warwick, Oxford, and London. We find him in close correspondence, generally on subjects of literature or scholarship, with his friends Cary and Birch. Another of his intimate friends of the years just preceding these had been Rough, a young lawyer married to a daughter of Wilkes, and then of a shining promise which smouldered off later into disappointment and mediocrity. With him Landor on slight occasion or none had about this time one of his impulsive, irreconcilable quarrels. In the meantime his father's health was gradually and painfully breaking up. It was evident that Walter would soon come into possession of the patrimonial portion of his inheritance. He did not wait that event to outrun his allowance. We find him buying a horse one day, a Titian another, a Hogarth on the third; and generally beginning to assume the habits of a gentleman of property and taste. He was full at the same time of lofty schemes, literary and other. The expedition of the fleet

under Nelson called forth some verses of which we cannot but regret the loss, and in which the writer seemed, to quote the friend to whom he addressed them, "to have been inspired by the prophetic spirit ascribed to the poets of old, and to have anticipated the glorious victory of Nelson, the news of which had reached me just before I received them." The victory in question was the battle of Trafalgar, and between the date of this letter, November 11, 1805, and Christmas of the same year, Dr. Landor had died, and Walter had come into possession of his patrimony.

CHAPTER III.

MORE EXPERIMENTS AND MARRIAGE—BATH—SPAIN—LLANTHONY—COUNT JULIAN.

(1805—1814.)

As soon as he was his own master, Landor proceeded to enlarge his style of living in proportion to his increased means, or rather beyond such proportion as it turned out. He continued to make Bath his headquarters, and, externally at least, lived there for some time the life of any other young, although indeed he was not now so very young, Fortunio. His political opinions were a source of some scandal, and it was remarked that any other man talking as Landor talked would have been called to account for it over and over again. Once or twice, indeed, it seems as if collisions had only been averted by the good offices of friends; but there was something about Landor which did not encourage challenge; partly, no doubt, his obvious intrepidity, and partly, we may infer, his habitual exactness on the point of personal courtesy even in the midst of his most startling sallies. Perhaps, too, republicanism seemed to lose something of its odiousness in a gentleman of Landor's known standing and fortune. Common report exaggerated at this time his wealth and his expectations, and his own prodigality in the matter of horses, carriages, servants, plate, pictures, and the like, lent coun-

tenance to the exaggeration. In his personal habits, it must at the same time be noted, Landor was now, as always, frugal. He drank water, or only the lightest wines, and ate fastidiously indeed, but sparely. All his life he would touch no viands but such as were both choice and choicely dressed, and he preferred to eat them alone, or in the company of one or two, regarding crowded repasts as fit only for savages. "To dine in company with more than two is a Gaulish and a German thing. I can hardly bring myself to believe that I have eaten in concert with twenty; so barbarous and herdlike a practice does it now appear to me, such an incentive to drink much and talk loosely; not to add, such a necessity to speak loud; which is clownish and odious in the extreme." The speaker in the above passage is Lucullus, but the sentiments are Landor's own. Neither does Landor seem at any time to have taken trouble about his dress; having indeed in later life come to be conspicuously negligent in that particular. In these early Bath days we have to picture him to ourselves simply as a solid, massive, energetic presence, in society sometimes silent and abstracted, sometimes flaming with eloquence and indignation; his figure robust and commanding, but not tall, his face principally noticeable for its bold, full, blue-grey eyes and strong, high-arched brows, with dark hair falling over and half concealing the forehead, and a long, stubborn upper lip, and aggressive set of the jaw, betokening truly enough the passionate temper of the man, yet in conversation readily breaking up into the sunniest, most genial smile.

Such as he was, then, Landor was in high request for the time being in the assembly-rooms both of Bath and Clifton. These, no doubt, were the days in which, as he

wrote long afterwards to Lady Blessington, he suffered so much annoyance from his bad dancing. "How grievously has my heart ached," such is his large way of putting it, "when others were in the full enjoyment of that recreation which I had no right even to partake of." Nevertheless, Landor was kindly looked on by the fair, and only too impetuously ready to answer sigh with sigh. His flirtations were numerous and were carried far. There is even not wanting, in his dealings with and his language concerning women during this brief period, a touch of commonplace rakishness, a shadow of vulgarity nowhere else to be discerned in the ways of this most unvulgar of mankind. But such shadows were merely on the surface. Inwardly, Landor's letters show him ill content, and longing, if he only knew how to find it, for something high and steadfast in his life. He was given as much as ever to solid reading and reflection, and stirred in a moment to wholesome and manly sorrow at the loss of a friend or the breach of an old association. A Mrs. Lambe, whom he had warmly regarded from boyhood, died about this time at Warwick, and soon afterwards came the news of the sudden death in India of Rose Aylmer, the friend of Welsh days to whose casual loan Landor, as we saw, had been indebted for the first hint of *Gebir*. By both these losses Landor was deeply moved, by that of Rose Aylmer in especial his thoughts being for days and nights entirely possessed. During his vigils he wrote the first draft of the little elegy, "carved as it were in ivory or in gems," which in its later form became famous:—

> Ah, what avails the sceptred race?
>   Ah, what the form divine?
> What every virtue, every grace?
>   Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

Just, natural, simple, severely and at the same time hauntingly melodious, however baldly or stoically they may strike the ear attuned to more high-pitched lamentations, these are the lines which made afterwards so deep an impression upon Charles Lamb. Tipsy or sober, it is reported of that impressionable spirit a few years before his death, he would always be repeating *Rose Aylmer*. The effect obtained by the iteration of the young girl's two beautiful names at the beginning of the fourth and fifth lines is an afterthought. In place of this simple, musical invocation, the fourth line had originally begun with a lame explanatory conjunction, "For, Aylmer," and the fifth with a commonplace adjective, "Sweet Aylmer." In the seventh line "memories" is a correction for the alliterative and vaguer "sorrows" of the first draft. Landor's affection for the same lost friend and companion is again expressed, we may remember, in another poem of a much later date headed *Abertawy*, which furnishes a good example of his ordinary manner, part playful, part serious, and not free from slips both of taste and workmanship, in this kind of autobiographical reminiscence, and which ends with the following gravely tender lines:—

Where is she now? Call'd far away
By one she dared not disobey,
To those proud halls, for youth unfit,
Where princes stand and judges sit.
Where Ganges rolls his widest wave
She dropt her blossom in the grave;
Her noble name she never changed,
Nor was her nobler heart estranged.

The losses above mentioned and others occurring in the circle of Landor's friends about this time, 1805—1806, prompted him to compose several pieces of the elegiac kind, both in English and Latin, which he collected and published under the title *Simonidea*. But these elegiac pieces did not stand alone. They were accompanied by others in right of which the volume might just as well have been called *Anacreontica*, namely a selection, made by Ianthè, of love-poems addressed in English to herself, besides some Latin verses of so free a tenour that Landor was by-and-by ashamed of having published them. "I printed whatever was marked with a pencil by a woman who loved me, and I consulted all her caprices. I added some Latin poetry of my own, more pure in its Latinity than its sentiment. When you read the *Simonidea*, pity and forgive me." Several of Landor's early writings are now excessively rare, more than one indeed being only known to exist in a solitary example; but of the *Simonidea*, so far as I have been able to ascertain, not even a single copy has been preserved.

Soon after this, moved, it would seem, partly by his strained finances, and partly by his sanguine imagination, Landor conceived the plan of alienating his paternal estate in Staffordshire, in order to acquire another yielding, or capable of being made to yield, larger returns in a wilder part of the country. He turned his thoughts first towards the lakes. Here he made a tour in the spring of 1807; found an estate which enchanted him, beside the small romantic Lake of Loweswater, and at once began negotiations for its purchase. These falling through, he in the next year pitched upon another and a very noble property, which was for sale in a country nearer to his own accustomed haunts, that, namely, of Llanthony on the Welsh

border. To his overwhelming desire to become lord of Llanthony all impediments had now to give way, with what consequences to himself and others we shall see.

But before the complicated arrangements connected with this purchase were completed, events of great interest in Landor's life had come to pass. First there was the beginning of his acquaintance with Southey. Of all English writers of that age, they were the two who most resembled each other by their science in the technical craft of letters, by their high and classical feeling for the honour and dignity of the English language, and by the comprehensiveness and solidity of their reading. Ever since Southey had discovered that Landor was the author of *Gebir*, and Landor that Southey was its admiring critic, a preconceived sympathy had sprung up between the two men. Since then Southey had written *Madoc*, the first, and *Thalaba*, the second, of his mythological epics, and in *Madoc* had avowedly profited by Landor's example, both as to the way of *seeing*, as he put it, for the purposes of poetry, and as to the management of his blank verse. On his tour in the lake country, Landor, who was no seeker of acquaintances, and indeed once boasted, in his serene way, that he had never accepted a letter of introduction in his life, had missed, and expressed his regret at missing, the opportunity of meeting Southey.

It was in Southey's native Bristol, at the lodgings of his friend Danvers, that he and Landor met for the first time in the spring of 1808. They took to each other at once, and a friendship was formed which lasted without break or abatement for thirty years. In many of their opinions Landor and Southey differed much already, and their differences were destined to increase as time went on, but differences of opinion brought no shadow between

them. Each seems instinctively to have recognized whatever was sterling, loyal, and magnanimous in the other's nature. Each, though this is a minor matter, heartily respected in the other the scrupulous and accomplished literary workman. Each probably liked and had a fellow-feeling for the other's boyish exuberance of vitality and proneness to exaggeration and denunciation. For it is to be noted that Landor's intimacies were almost always with men of emphatic and declamatory eloquence like his own. Parr, the most honoured friend of his youth, Southey and Francis Hare, the most cherished of his manhood, were all three Olympian talkers in their degree. But Landor and his kindred Olympians, it seems, understood each other, and knew how to thunder and lighten without collision. These last, as it happens, are the very words afterwards used by Southey in preparing a common friend for the kind of personage he would meet in Landor. "He does more than any of the gods of all my mythologies, for his very words are thunder and lightning, such is the power and splendour with which they burst out. But all is perfectly natural; there is no trick about him, no preaching, no playing off." If we thus have Southey's testimony at once to the impressiveness and to the integrity of Landor's personality, we have Landor's to "the genial voice and radiant eye" of Southey, besides a hundred other expressions of affection for his person and admiration for his character and his powers.

With the immediate result of his own and Landor's first conversation, Southey could not fail to be gratified. He had been forced of late to abandon his most cherished task, the continuance of his series of mythologic epics. The plain reason was that he could not afford to spend time on work so little remunerative. Landor, when

Southey told him this, was in an instant all generosity and delicacy, begging to be allowed to print future productions of the kind at his own expense,—"as many as you will write, and as many copies as you please." In all this there was not the least taint of patronage or condescension on the part of the magnificent young squire and scholar towards the struggling, although already distinguished, man of letters, his senior by only a year. Landor was as incapable of assuming superiority on any grounds but those of character and intellect as of enduring such assumption in others. Southey, as it turned out, only made practical use of his friend's offer to the extent of allowing him to buy a considerable number of copies of *Kehama* when that work appeared. But the encouragement was everything to him, and had for its consequence that *Kehama*, already begun and dropped, was industriously resumed and finished, and followed in due course by *Roderick*, the manuscript of either poem being dutifully sent off in successive instalments as it was written for Landor to read and criticise. At the same time an active and intimate correspondence sprung up between the two men, and in after-years supplied, indeed, the chief aliment of their friendship, their meetings being from the force of circumstances rare.

The next event in Landor's life was his sudden and brief appearance as a man of action on the theatre of European war. Napoleon Buonaparte had just carried into effect the infamous plot which he had conceived in order to make himself master of Spain and Portugal. But before his brother Joseph had time to be proclaimed king at Madrid, all Spain was up in arms. Against the French armies of occupation there sprang up from one end of the country to the other first a tumultuary and then an organ-

ized resistance. So swift, efficient, and unanimous a rising had nowhere else been witnessed. A people, it seemed, had at last been found with manhood enough in their veins to refuse the yoke of France, and in the hearts of all friends of liberty despair began to give way to hope. How much of anarchical self-seeking and distracted, pusillanimous intrigue in reality lay latent in these patriot bosoms, was little suspected in the enthusiasm of the hour. In England especially, the Spaniards were passionately acclaimed as a race of heroes, on whose victory depended the very salvation of the world. Instant help, both in men and money, was despatched to the insurgents by the English Government. Poets and orators extolled their deeds; volunteers pressed to join their standards. While Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, from the seclusion of their lakes and mountains, did their utmost to swell the tide of popular emotion, Landor on his part was not content with words. One evening at Brighton he found himself "preaching a crusade" to an audience of two Irish gentlemen, who caught his ardour, and the three determined to start for Spain without more ado. Early in August they set sail from Falmouth for Corunna, which was the seat of an English mission under Stuart, afterwards ambassador in Paris. From Corunna Landor addressed a letter to the provincial government, enclosing a gift of ten thousand reals for the relief of the inhabitants of Venturada, a town burnt by the French, and at the same time proclaiming that he would equip at his own cost, and accompany to the field, all volunteers up to the number of a thousand who might choose to join him. Both gift and proclamation were thankfully acknowledged; a body of volunteers was promptly organized; and Landor marched with them through Leon

and Gallicia to join the Spanish army under Blake in the mountains of Biscay. In the meantime his incurably jealous and inflammable spirit of pride, inflammable especially in contact with those in office or authority, had caught fire at a depreciatory phrase dropped by the English envoy, Stuart, at one of the meetings of the Junta. Stuart's expression had not really referred to Landor at all, but he chose to apply it to himself, and on his march accordingly indited and made public an indignant letter of remonstrance.

To the groundless disgust which Landor had thus conceived and vented at a fancied slight, was soon added that with which he was more reasonably inspired by the incompetence and sloth of the Spanish general, Blake. He remained with the army of the North for several idle weeks in the neighbourhood of Reÿnosa and Aguilar. He was very desirous of seeing Madrid, but denied himself the excursion for fear of missing a battle, which after all was never fought. It was not until after the end of September, when the convention between Sir Hew Dalrymple and Junot had been signed in Portugal, and when Blake's army broke up its quarters at Reÿnosa, that Landor, his band of volunteers having apparently melted away in the meanwhile, separated himself from the Spanish forces and returned suddenly to England. He narrowly escaped being taken prisoner in the endeavour to travel by way of Bilbao, which had then just been re-entered by the French under Ney. The thanks of the supreme Junta for his services were in course of time conveyed to him at home, together with the title and commission of an honorary colonel in the Spanish army.

Landor had departed leaving his countrymen in a frenzy of enthusiasm. He found them on his return in a

frenzy of indignation and disgust. The military compromise just effected in Portugal was denounced by popular clamour in terms of unmeasured fury; and not by popular clamour only. Men of letters and of thought are habitually too much given to declaiming at their ease against the delinquencies of men of action and affairs. The inevitable friction of practical politics generates heat enough already, and the office of the political thinker and critic should be to supply, not heat, but light. The difficulties which attend his own unmolested task, the task of seeking after and proclaiming salutary truths, should teach him to make allowance for the far more urgent difficulties which beset the politician, the man obliged, amid the clash of interests and temptations, to practise from hand to mouth, and at his peril, the most uncertain and at the same time the most indispensable of the experimental arts. The early years of this century in England may not have been years remarkable for wise or consistent statesmanship; they were certainly remarkable for the frantic vituperation of those in power by those who looked on. The writers of the Lake school were at this time as loud and as little reasonable in their outcries as any group of men in the kingdom, and Southey was the loudest of them all. His letters, and especially his letters to Landor, on the public questions of the hour, can hardly be read even now without a twinge of humiliation at the spectacle of a man of his knowledge, sincerity, and candour, giving way to so idle a fury of misjudgment and malediction. Landor on his part is moderate by comparison, and has a better hold both of facts and principles, although he is ready to go great lengths with his friend in condemnation of the English ministers and commanders.

In the succeeding winter and spring nothing but Spain was in men's minds or conversation. After the victory and death of Sir John Moore at Corunna in January, 1809, Landor was for a while on the point of sailing for that country as a volunteer for the second time. Eventually, however, he forbore, private affairs in connexion with his new property at Llanthony helping among other things to detain him. In order to effect this purchase Landor had required as much as 20,000*l*. over and above the sum realized by the sale of his Staffordshire estate. For this purpose he made up his mind to sell Tachbrook, the smaller of the two properties in Warwickshire destined to devolve to him at the death of his mother. Her consent was necessary to this step, as well as that of his brothers, and an act of parliament authorizing the breach of the entail. All these matters, together with some minor arrangements protecting the interests of Mrs. Landor and her other children by charges on the new estate, and the like, were got through in the summer of this year (1809). Early in the autumn of the same year we find Landor established in temporary quarters on his new property. It was a wild and striking country that he had chosen for his future home. Most readers are probably familiar with the distant aspect of those mountains whose sombre masses and sweeping outlines arrest the eye of the spectator looking westward over the Welsh marches from the summit of the Malvern hills. These are the Black or Hatterill mountains of Monmouthshire and Brecknockshire. Of all their recesses the most secluded and most romantic, although not the most remote, is the valley of Ewias, within which stands the ruined priory of Llanthony.[1] This valley

[1] Pronounce Llanthóny; said to be short for Llandevi Nanthodeni, *i.e.* church of St. David by the water of Hodeni. The

winds for some twelve miles between two high continuous ridges, of which the sides are now flowing and now precipitous, here broken into wooded dingles, here receding into grassy amphitheatres, and there heaped with the copse-grown ruins of ancient landslips. Along its bed there races or loiters according to the weather—and it is a climate notorious for rain—the stream Hodeni, Honddu, or Hondy. The opening of the valley is towards the south, and was blocked in ancient times with thickets and morasses, so that its only approach was over one or other of its lofty lateral ridges. In those days the scene was wont to lay upon the few who ever entered it the spell of solitude and penitential awe. It was said that St. David had for a time dwelt here as a hermit. In the reign of William Rufus a certain knight having found his way into the valley during the chase, the call fell upon him to do the like; the fame of his conversion reached the court; he was joined by a second seeker after the holy life, then by others; gifts and wealth poured in upon them; they were enrolled as a brotherhood of the order of St. Augustine, and built themselves a priory in the midst of the valley, on a level field half a furlong above the stream. Its ruins are still standing dark and venerable amid the verdure of the valley, a rambling assemblage of truncated towers, disroofed presbytery, shattered aisles, and modernized outbuildings. The remains of the prior's lodgings, together with that one of the two western towers to which they are contiguous, are fitted up, the ancient

early history of this famous border priory is better known than that of almost any other foundation of the same kind; see the articles of Mr. Roberts in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, vol. i., No. 3, and of Mr. Freeman, *ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. i.; also a sketch by the present writer in the *Portfolio*, Jan. 1881, from which last two or three sentences are repeated in the text.

sanctities all forgotten, as a bailiff's house and inn. The avocations of dairy, scullery, and larder are carried on beneath the shelter of the other tower, while the wild rose and snapdragon wave from the crevices overhead, and the pigeons flit and nestle among the shaftless openings.

Such as Llanthony Priory is now, such, making allowance for some partial dilapidations which neither he nor his successors took enough care to prevent, it in all essentials was when Landor took it over from its former owner in the spring of 1809, and along with it the fine estate to which it gives its name. The property is some eight miles long, and includes for that distance the whole sweep of the vale of Ewias. The valley farms contain rich pasturage and fairly productive corn-lands, while the eastern ridge is covered with grass, and the western with richly heathered moor. The moors yield tolerable shooting, and the Hondy is famous for its trout. But it was not for the sake of shooting or fishing that Landor came to Llanthony. He was, indeed, devoted to animals, but not in the ordinary English sense of being devoted to the pastime of killing them. One of the points by which observers used afterwards to be most struck in Landor was the infinite affection and mutual confidence which subsisted between him and his pets of the dumb creation, both dogs and others, with whom the serenity of his relations used to remain perfectly undisturbed throughout his most explosive demonstrations against the delinquencies of his own species. But his sympathies for animals were not confined to pets. In early days he had plied both gun and rod, but by this time or soon afterwards he seems to have quite given them up. Even in youth he had suffered acute remorse on one day finding a partridge, which he had bagged over night and supposed

dead, still alive in the morning. Cruelty was for him the chief, "if not indeed," as he once put it, "the only," sin, and cruelty to animals was at least as bad as cruelty to men. Angling in later life he once wrote of as "that sin." In a letter to his sister he writes more tolerantly, and with a touch of his peculiar charm, of field sports in general:—"Let men do these things if they will. Perhaps there is no harm in it; perhaps it makes them no crueller than they would be otherwise. But it is hard to take away what we cannot give, and life is a pleasant thing—at least to birds. No doubt the young ones say tender things to one another, and even the old ones do not dream of death."

If Landor was thus little of a sportsman, there was another province of a country gentleman's pursuits into which he could enter with all his heart, and that was planting. He loved trees as he loved flowers, not with any scientific or practical knowledge, but with a poet's keenness of perception, heightened by a peculiar vein of reflective and imaginative association. He could not bear either the unnecessary plucking of the one or felling of the other. "Ah," he represents himself in one of his dialogues as exclaiming at the sight of two fallen pines in Lombardy,—

. . . Ah, Don Pepino! old trees in their living state are the only things that money cannot command. Rivers leave their beds, run into cities and traverse mountains for it; obelisks and arches, palaces and temples, amphitheatres and pyramids, rise up like exhalations at its bidding; even the free spirit of Man, the only thing great on earth, crouches and cowers in its presence. It passes away and vanishes before venerable trees. What a sweet odour is here! whence comes it? sweeter it appears to me and stronger than the pine itself.

The interlocutor, Don Pepino, explains that the odour proceeds from a neighbouring linden, and that the linden, a very old and large one, is doomed; whereupon Landor,—

O Don Pepino! the French, who abhor whatever is old and whatever is great, have spared it; the Austrians, who sell their fortresses and their armies, nay, sometimes their daughters, have not sold it: must it fall? . . .

How many fond and how many lively thoughts have been nurtured under this tree! how many kind hearts have beaten here! Its branches are not so numerous as the couples they have invited to sit beside it, nor its blossoms and leaves as the expressions of tenderness it has witnessed. What appeals to the pure all-seeing heavens! what similitudes to the everlasting mountains! what protestations of eternal truth and constancy from those who now are earth; they, and their shrouds, and their coffins!

The passage in which Landor has best expressed his feeling about flowers is one of verse, and one of the few in his writings which are well known, though not so well as by its unmatched delicacy and grave, unobtrusive sweetness it deserves.

When hath wind or rain
Borne hard upon weak plants that wanted me,
And I (however they might bluster round)
Walkt off? 'Twere most ungrateful: for sweet scents
Are the swift vehicles of still sweeter thoughts,
And nurse and pillow the dull memory
That would let drop without them her best stores.
They bring me tales of youth and tones of love,
And 'tis and ever was my wish and way
To let all flowers live freely, and all die
(Whene'er their Genius bids their souls depart)
Among their kindred in their native place.
I never pluck the rose; the violet's head
Hath shaken with my breath upon its bank
And not reproacht it; the ever-sacred cup
Of the pure lily hath between my hands
Felt safe, unsoil'd, nor lost one grain of gold.

"I love these beautiful and peaceful tribes," Landor says elsewhere, with special reference to the flowers of Llanthony; "they always meet one in the same place at the same season; and years have no more effect on their placid countenances than on so many of the most favoured gods." Such are the exquisite tendernesses of feeling and imagination which go together in Landor with his masterful energy and strength.

With these tastes and predilections, then, and in his lordly, imaginative, sanguinely unpractical manner, Landor entered upon his new career as the beneficent landowner of a neglected and backward neighbourhood. He would have the priory restored, and for that purpose portions of the existing ruins were taken down, and their stones carefully numbered. He would raise a new mansion for himself and his heirs, and he set the builders to work accordingly upon a site a quarter of a mile above the ruins. Communications in the district were by rough bridle-paths and fords, and Landor set gangs of men about the construction of roads and bridges. Agriculture was miserably primitive; he imported sheep from Segovia, and applied to Southey and other friends for tenants who should introduce and teach improved methods of cultivation. The inhabitants were drunken, impoverished, and morose; he was bent upon reclaiming and civilizing them The woods had suffered from neglect or malice; he would clothe the sides of the valley with cedars of Lebanon. With that object he bought two thousand cones, calculated to yield a hundred seeds each, intending to do ten times as much afterwards, and exulting in the thought of the two million cedar-trees which he would thus leave for the shelter and the delight of posterity.

While all these great operations were in progress,

Landor was not a permanent resident, but only a frequent visitor, on his estate, inhabiting for a few weeks at a time the rooms in the church tower, and living in the intervals principally at Bath. Here, in the early spring of 1811, he met a young lady at a ball, and as soon as he had set eyes on her exclaimed, in the true Landorian manner, "By heaven! that's the nicest girl in the room, and I'll marry her." And marry her he did; the adventure quickly ending in that irreversible manner, instead of, as others as rashly begun had ended, in protestations, misunderstandings, and retreat. Mr. Forster appositely contrasts Landor's reckless action with his weighty and magnificent words concerning marriage:—"Death itself to the reflecting mind is less serious than marriage. The elder plant is cut down that the younger may have room to flourish: a few tears drop into the loosened soil, and buds and blossoms spring over it. Death is not even a blow, is not even a pulsation; it is a pause. But marriage unrolls the awful lot of numberless generations. Health, Genius, Honour, are the words inscribed on some; on others are Disease, Fatuity, and Infamy." But it was Landor's fate to be thus wise only for others; wise on paper; wise after the event; wise, in a word, in every and any manner except such as could conduce to his own welfare. His marriage was not a happy one. His bride, Julia Thuillier, was the portionless daughter of an unprosperous banker at Banbury, said to be descended from an old Swiss family. Landor, with his moods of lofty absence and pre-occupation, and with the tumultuous and disconcerting nature, sometimes, of his descents into the region of reality, must at best have been a trying companion to live with. Nevertheless it would seem as though a woman capable of sharing his thoughts, and of

managing him in his fits of passion, as his wiser friends were accustomed to manage him in later years, by yielding to the storm at first, until his own sense of humour would be aroused and it would disperse itself in peals of laughter, might have had an enviable, if not an easy, life with one so great-minded and so fundamentally kind and courteous. Mrs. Landor seems to have had none of the gifts of the domestic artist; she was not one of those fine spirits who study to create, out of the circumstances and characters with which they have to deal, the best attainable ideal of a home; but a commonplace provincial beauty enough, although lively and agreeable in her way. "God forbid," in conversation once growled Landor, who was habitually reticent on his private troubles, "that I should do otherwise than declare that she always *was* agreeable—to every one but *me*." She was sixteen years or more younger than her husband, a fact of which, when differences occurred, she seems to have been not slow to remind him; and there is impartial evidence to show that, in some at least of the disputes which led to breaches more or less permanent between them, the immediately offending tongue was not the husband's, but the wife's. He himself once breaks out, in commenting on Milton's line,

> Because thou hast hearken'd to the voice of thy wife,

"there are very few who have not done this, *bon gré, mal gré;* and many have thought it curse enough of itself." These matters, however, belong to a later point of our narrative. At first the little wife, with her golden hair, her smiles, and her spirits, seems to have done very well. She accompanied Landor on his visits to Llanthony, where they received as guests, at first in the tower rooms of the priory, and later in some that had been got habitable in

the new house, several members of his family and friends. The Southeys, to Landor's great delight, were his first visitors, coming in the summer of 1811, within a few months of his marriage. Later came his sisters, and later again, his mother.

But neither the care of his estate nor his marriage had the least interrupted the habitual occupations of Landor's mind. What he really most valued in a beautiful country was the fit and inspiring theatre which it afforded for his meditations. Whether in town or country he reflected and composed habitually out walking, and therefore preferred at all times to walk alone. There were half-hours, he represents himself as saying to Southey, when, although in good humour and good spirits, he would on no consideration be disturbed by the necessity of talking. "In this interval there is neither storm nor sunshine of the mind, but calm and (as the farmers call it) *growing* weather, in which the blades of thought spring up and dilate insensibly. Whatever I do I must do in the open air, or in the silence of night; either is sufficient; but I prefer the hours of exercise, or, what is next to exercise, of field-repose." In these years Landor was composing much. In 1810 he printed a couple of Latin odes, *Ad Gustavum Regem*, *Ad Gustavum exsulem*, and began the first of his *Idyllia Heroica* in that language, on the touching story of the priest Coresus, his love and sacrifice. He also grappled for the first time with English tragedy. His choice of subject was dictated by his own and the general interest in and enthusiasm for Spain. He fixed on that romantic and semi-mythical episode of early Spanish history, the alliance of the heroic Count Julian with the invading Moors, of whom he had been formerly the scourge, against his own people and their King Roderick, in order

to avenge the outrage which Roderick had done to his daughter. The same subject was in various forms occupying both Southey and Scott about the same time; Southey in his epic of *Roderick*, called in the first draft *Pelayo* and sent in instalments as it was written to Landor; and Scott in his *Vision of Don Roderick*. Landor had begun his tragedy, as it happened, at the same time as Southey his epic, in the late summer of 1810, and he finished it early the next spring. His tragedy and his engagement are amusingly mixed up in a letter written to Southey in April, and ending "Adieu, and congratulate me. I forgot to say that I have added thirty-five verses to Scene 2 of Act III."

Landor's theory was that the passions should in poetry, and especially in tragedy, be represented, "naked, like the heroes and the Gods." In realizing the high and desperate passions of Roderick and Julian, the offender and the avenger, he has girded himself for rivalry with whatever is austere, haughty, pregnant, and concise in the works of the masters whom he most admired for those qualities. But in raising his characters up to this ideal height, in seeking to delineate their passions in forms of this heroic energy and condensation, this "nakedness," to use his own word, Landor has not, I think, succeeded in keeping them human. Human to himself during the process of their creation they unquestionably were; "I brought before me," he writes, "the various characters, the very tones of their voices, their forms, complexions, and step. In the daytime I laboured, and at night unburdened my mind, shedding many tears." Nevertheless they do not live in like manner for the reader. The conception of Count Julian, desperately loving both his dishonoured daughter and the country against which he has turned in

order to chastise her dishonourer; inexorably bent on a vengeance the infliction of which costs him all the while the direst agony and remorse; is certainly grandiose and terrible enough. But even this conception does not seem to be realized, except at moments, in a manner to justify the enthusiastic praise bestowed upon it by De Quincey, in his erratic, fragmentary, and otherwise grudging notes on Landor. Still less are we livingly impressed by the vanquished, remorseful, still defiant and intriguing Roderick, the injured and distracted Egilona, the dutiful and outraged Covilla, her lover Sisabert, or the vindictive and suspicious Moorish leader Muza. These and the other characters are made to declare themselves by means of utterances often admirably energetic, and of images sometimes magnificently daring; yet they fail to convince or carry us away. This effect is partly due, no doubt, to defect of dramatic construction. The scenes of the play succeed each other by no process of organic sequence or evolution, a fact admitted by Landor himself when he afterwards called it a series of dialogues rather than a drama. Some of them are themselves dramatically sterile, tedious, and confusing. Others, and isolated lines and sayings in almost all, are written, if not with convincing felicity, at any rate with overmastering force. On the whole, we shall be more inclined to agree with Lamb's impression of *Count Julian* than with De Quincey's. "I must read again Landor's *Julian*," writes Lamb in 1815. "I have not read it for some time. I think he must have failed in Roderick, for I remember nothing of him, nor of any distinct character as a character—only fine sounding passages." The reader may perhaps judge of the quality of the work by the following fragment, exhibiting at its highest point of tension the struggle between the enemies

Roderick and Julian after Roderick has fallen into Julian's power.

> *Julian.* Could I speak patiently who speak to thee,
> I would say more . . . part of thy punishment
> It should be, to be taught.
> *Roderigo.* Reserve thy wisdom
> Until thy patience come, its best ally.
> I learn no lore, of peace or war, from thee.
> *Julian.* No, thou shalt study soon another tongue,
> And suns more ardent shall mature thy mind.
> Either the cross thou bearest, and thy knees
> Among the silent caves of Palestine
> Wear the sharp flints away with midnight prayer;
> Or thou shalt keep the fasts of Barbary,
> Shalt wait amid the crowds that throng the well
> From sultry noon till the skies fade again,
> To draw up water and to bring it home
> In the crackt gourd of some vile testy knave,
> Who spurns thee back with bastinadoed foot
> For ignorance or delay of his command.
> *Roderigo.* Rather the poison or the bowstring.
> *Julian.* Slaves
> To other's passions die such deaths as those:
> Slaves to their own should die—
> *Roderigo.* What worse?
> *Julian.* Their own.
> *Roderigo.* Is this thy counsel, renegade?
> *Julian.* Not mine;
> I point a better path, nay, force thee on.
> I shelter thee from every brave man's sword
> While I am near thee: I bestow on thee
> Life: if thou die, 'tis when thou sojournest
> Protected by this arm and voice no more;
> 'Tis slavishly, 'tis ignominiously,
> 'Tis by a villain's knife.
> *Roderigo.* By whose?
> *Julian.* Roderigo's.

Landor's severe method does not admit much scenic or accessory ornament in a work of this kind, but he has

made a vivid and pleasant use of his own 1
experiences in the passage where Julian
daughter of the retreats where she may hide

> Wide are the regions of our far-famed land
> Thou shalt arrive at her remotest bounds,
> See her best people, choose some holiest h
> Whether where Castro from surrounding v
> Hears the hoarse ocean roar among his ca
> And through the fissure in the green churc
> The wind wail loud the calmest summer d
> Or where Santona leans against the hill,
> Hidden from sea and land by groves and b

And again,—

> If strength be wanted for security,
> Mountains the guard, forbidding all appro
> With iron-pointed and uplifted gates,
> Thou wilt be welcome too in Aguilar,
> Impenetrable, marble-turreted,
> Surveying from aloft the limpid ford,
> The massive fane, the sylvan avenue;
> Whose hospitality I proved myself,
> A willing leader in no impious war
> When fame and freedom urged me; or m
> In Reÿnosas' dry and thriftless dale,
> Unharvested beneath October moons,
> Among those frank and cordial villagers.

For the rest, *Count Julian* is not poor i
found reflexions upon life, carved, polis
pressed in the manner which was Lan
thus,

> Wretched is he a woman hath forgiven
> With her forgiveness ne'er hath love re

or thus,

> Of all who pass us in life's drear descer
> We grieve the most for those who wish

During the composition of *Count Juli*

been in close correspondence with Southey, and had submitted to him the manuscript as it progressed. He had at one moment entertained the obviously impracticable idea of getting his tragedy put on the stage by Kemble. This abandoned, he offered it to Longmans for publication. They declined to print it either at their own costs, or even, when he proposed that method, at the author's. Whereupon Landor writes to Southey: "We have lately had cold weather here, and fires. On receiving the last letter of Mr. Longman I committed to the flames my tragedy of *Ferranti and Giulio*, with which I intended to surprise you, and am resolved that never verse of mine shall be hereafter committed to anything else. My literary career has been a very curious one. You cannot imagine how I feel relieved at laying down its burden, and abandoning its tissue of humiliations. I fancied I had at last acquired the right tone of tragedy, and was treading down at heel the shoes of Alfieri." The resolution recorded with this composed and irrevocable air lasted no longer than the choler which had provoked it; and though the play of *Ferranti and Giulio*, all but a few fragments, had been irretrievably sacrificed, we find *Count Julian* within a few months offered to and accepted by Mr. Murray, on the introduction of Southey, and actually published at the beginning of 1812.

The same house brought out in the same year another production of Landor's of a totally different character, namely, a *Commentary on Memoirs of Mr. Fox.* In the biography of Landor this volume is of peculiar interest. It contains his views on men, books, and governments, set forth in the manner that was most natural to him, that is miscellaneously and without sequence, in a prose which has none of the inequalities nor opacities of his

verse, but is at once condensed and lucid,
emphasis, and stately without effort or
fulness of Landor's mind, the clearness a
his decisions, the mixed dogmatism and
manner, are nowhere more characteristicall
text for his deliverances is furnished by
of Fox, then lately published. His moti
declared in the following words:—"I wo
(Fox's) actions to his contemporaries a
will appear to posterity. I would destro
of the book before me, because I am
that its tendency would be pernicious.
amiable man, so was the subject of his
all the statesmen who have been conversa
ment of our affairs, during a reign the
in our annals, the example of Mr. Fo
would be the most fatal to our interests a
where he speaks of the sacrifices made
ration of the book to appease the scruples
We know from his letters that one of his
days was to render himself and other lov
independent of the publishers, by establ
press of his own at Llanthony, "at a cos
"for the purpose, at much private loss, dis
of setting the public mind more erect,
two factions into the dust." The *Comm*
printed contains, first, a dedicatory addr
dent of the United States, deprecatin
imminent, in consequence of the fiscal p
between them and the mother country.
this dedication we find Landor putting
first time one of the fundamental articles o
shape of the following classification of an

Consider, sir, what are the two nations, if I must call them two, which are about, not to terminate, but to extend their animosities by acts of violence and slaughter. If you think as I do, and free men, allowing for the degree of their capacities, generally think alike, you will divide the creatures of the Almighty into three parts; first, men who enjoy the highest perfection of liberty and civilization; secondly, men who live under the despotism of one person or more, and are not permitted to enjoy their reason for the promotion of their happiness; and thirdly, the brute creation, which is subject also to arbitrary will, and whose happiness their slender powers of reasoning (for some they have) is inadequate to promote. These three classes, in my view of the subject, stand at equal distances.

After the dedication follows a preface full of measured invective against those responsible for the political and military affairs of England, varied by observations on the character of the French and of their ruler, for the character of which see above (p. 34), and by the following fine oratorical outburst, a little less accurately wrought and balanced than it would have been in Landor's later prose, in which the stringency of the penal laws against the poor is contrasted with the lenient treatment of a State delinquent like Lord Melville, long Lord Privy Seal for Scotland and President of the Board of Control for India:—

If an unfortunate mother at a distance from home, carrying with her a half-starved infant, along roads covered with snow, should snatch a shirt from a hedge to protect it from a miserable death, she is condemned to die. That she never could have known the law, that she never could have assented to its equity, avails her nothing; that she was pierced by the cries of her own offspring; that it was not merely the instigation of want, but the force of omnipotent nature, the very voice of God himself, the preservation of a human being, of her own, the cause of her wanderings and her wretchedness, of her

captivity and her chains: what are these in opposition to an act of parliament? she dies. Look on the other side. A nobleman of most acute judgment, well versed in all the usages of his country, rich, powerful, commanding, with a sway more absolute and unresisted than any of its ancient monarchs, the whole kingdom in which he was a subject, with all its boroughs, and its shires and its courts and its universities, and in addition, as merely a fief, the empire of all India; who possessed more lucrative patronage than all the crowned heads in Europe; let this illustrious character, to whom so many men of rank looked up as their protector, and whom senators and statesmen acknowledged as their guide; let this distinguished member of the British parliament break suddenly through the law which he himself had brought into the House for the conservation of our property, without necessity, without urgency, without temptation--and behold the consequence.

The consequence is somewhat flat; and omitting Landor's account of Melville's acquittal and careless bearing, we may remember that the most weighty and pointed of all his epigrams in verse is that which he directed against the same delinquent:—

God's laws declare
Thou shalt not swear
By aught in heaven above or earth below.
"Upon my honour!" Melville cries.
He swears, and lies.
Does Melville then break God's commandment? No.

Landor's preface further contains reflections on the utility and the lessons of history for statesmen, and on their neglect by Pitt and Fox; and ends with the expression of a wish for the continuance of the present ministry in office, and an urgent plea in favour of Catholic emancipation. In the body of his book he takes extracts from Trotter's *Memoirs* as they come, and appends to each his own

reflexions. Literature and politics, personal topics and general, succeed each other promiscuously. Here is what Landor has to say of Burke and his policy during the French revolution:—"Burke, the only member of Parliament whose views were extensive, and whose reading was all turned to practical account, was more violent than even Lord Grenville for a declaration of hostilities. His unrivalled eloquence was fatal to our glory; it silenced our renown for justice and for wisdom, undermined our internal prosperity, and invaded our domestic peace." Then follows a long disparaging criticism of Spenser, whose poetry always seemed to Landor fantastic, unreal, and somewhat wearisome; then a comparative note on Chaucer and Burns; and then, after discursive criticisms on the creations of Caliban and Cyclops, on Addison, and on the Spenserian stanza, comes a conclusion of Ciceronian gravity and grace. "It is better to leave off where reflexion may rest than where passion may be excited; and it is soothing to take the last view of politics from among the works of the imagination. . . . An escape in this manner from the mazes of politics and the discord of party, leaves such sensations on the heart as are experienced by the disinterested and sober man, after some public meeting, when he has quitted the crowded and noisy room, the crooked and narrow streets, the hisses and huzzas of the rabble, poor and rich, and enters his own grounds again, and meets his own family at the gate." Immediately after which Landor turns round again to the charge in a final, denunciatory postscript. This remarkable outpouring of an authoritative, versatile, and richly stored mind was destined to have no influence and few readers. Like the *Simonidea,* though in deference to a different order of susceptibilities, it

seems to have been recalled almost as soon as it was published, and the only copy known to exist is one formerly in the possession of Southey, and now in that of Lord Houghton.

Besides his two tragedies, *Count Julian* and the lost *Ferranti and Giulio*, Landor wrote, during the latter part of this Llanthony period, a comedy called the *Charitable Dowager*, the proceeds of which he destined for the relief of an old acquaintance in Spain, for whose hospitality he had good reason to be grateful when he found himself prevented from entering Bilbao. The piece was, however, neither produced nor even printed, and considering the quality of Landor's later efforts in the comic vein, its loss is probably not to be regretted. Landor had in these days been also at work at what he in his heart cared for most of all, his *Idyllia* and other poems in Latin; which Valpy, he writes, "the greatest of all coxcombs," very much wished to publish, but which he preferred to print on his own account at Oxford, the proceeds, if any, to be distributed among the distressed poor of Leipzig.

This was towards the close of 1813. In the meantime Landor's magnificent projects as a landlord had been crumbling under his hands. Less than four years had brought his affairs to such a pass as utterly to disgust him with Llanthony, Wales, and the Welsh. There was scarcely one of his undertakings but had proved abortive. There was scarcely a public authority of his district against whom he had not a grievance, or a neighbour, high or low, with whom he had not come into collision, or a tenant or labourer on his estate who had not turned against him. The origin of these troubles sprang almost always either from Landor's headlong generosity, or else from his impracticable punctiliousness. He had a genius

for the injudicious virtues, and those which recoil against their possessor. Of his besetting faults, pride and anger, pride constantly assured him that he was not as other men, anger as constantly resented the behaviour of other men when it fell below the standard of his own. He would insist on expecting ancient Roman principles in all with whom he came in contact, and when he was undeceived would flame into Rhadamanthine rage against the culprit, idealising peccadilloes into enormities, and denouncing and seeking to have them chastised accordingly. Thus he made bad worse, and by his lofty, impetuous, unwise ways, turned the whole country-side into a hostile camp. It is true that luck and the characters of those with whom he had to deal were much against him. His first disenchantments arose in the course of communications with men in authority. He wrote to the bishop of his diocese, asking permission to restore for service a part of Llanthony priory. His first letter received no answer. He repeated his request in a second, in the course of which he remarked, "God alone is great enough for me to ask anything of twice;" to which there came an answer coldly sanctioning his proposal, but saying that an act of parliament would be required before it could be carried out; whereupon Landor, who had lately had enough of acts of parliament, allowed the matter to drop. At the Monmouthshire assizes in 1812 he was on the grand jury. The members of that body having been in the usual formal terms adjured by the judge to lay before him whatever evidences they possessed of felony committed in the county, what must our noble Roman do but take the adjuration literally, and in defiance of all usage deliver with his own hand to the judge a written accusation of felony against an influential rascal of the neighbourhood,

an attorney and surveyor of taxes; coupled with a complaint against his brother jurors for neglect of duty in refusing to inquire into the case. The judge took no notice of the communication, and Landor, having naturally gained nothing by his action except the resentful or contemptuous shrugs of his fellow-jurors, closed the incident with a second letter of polite sarcasm, in which he wrote, "I acknowledge my error, and must atone for my presumption. But I really thought your lordship was in earnest, seeing you, as I did, in the robes of justice, and hearing you speak in the name and with the authority of the laws." About the same time, partly on the suggestion of the one or two gentlemen of the neighbourhood who had culture and character enough to be his friends, Landor applied to the Duke of Beaufort, the lord lieutenant, to be put on the commission of the peace of the county. There was no resident magistrate within ten miles of Llanthony, and yet his application was refused. Partly his politics, partly the fact that a brother of the Duke's had been foreman of the grand jury at the recent assize, explain the refusal. Landor thereupon wrote a temperate letter to the Lord Chancellor (Eldon), pointing out the necessity of a magistrate being appointed for his neighbourhood; and when he received no answer, followed it up by another, haughtier, but not less calm and measured, in which he describes his qualifications and his pursuits, and contrasts them in a strain of grave irony with those usually thought sufficient for a public servant: "I never now will accept, my lord, anything whatever that can be given by ministers or by chancellors, not even the dignity of a county justice, the only honour or office I ever have solicited."

Landor's worst troubles at Llanthony did not, however, proceed from men in high station, but from his own tenants

and labourers. He found the Welsh peasantry churlish, malicious, and unimprovable. "If drunkenness, idleness, mischief, and revenge are the principal characteristics of the savage state, what nation—I will not say in Europe, but in the world—is so singularly tattooed with them as the Welsh?" And again, "The earth contains no race of human beings so totally vile and worthless as the Welsh." The French themselves seemed no longer odious in comparison. Their government Landor had come to regard as at any rate more efficient and better administered than ours; and after three years' experience of the ingratitude, thriftlessness, and lawlessness of the people round about him, we find him already half determined to go and make his home in France. But things would probably never have really come to that pass had it not been for the malpractices of an English tenant, to whom Landor had looked most of all for the improvement of his property. This was one Betham, whose family was known, and one of his sisters highly esteemed, by both Lamb and Southey. Betham had used Southey's name to introduce himself to Landor as a tenant, and had been accepted, he and his family, with open arms in consequence. Landor rented him first one and then another of his best farms on terms of reckless liberality, although he knew nothing of agriculture, and his previous career had been that, first of an usher in a school, and then of a petty officer on board an East India Company's ship. He is the same whom Lamb had in his mind when, years afterwards, he wrote to Landor, "I knew all your Welsh annoyancers, the measureless B.'s. I knew a quarter of a mile of them. Seventeen brothers and sixteen sisters, as they appear to me in memory. There was one of them that used to fix his long legs on my fender and tell a story of a shark,

every night, endless, immortal. How have I grudged the salt-sea ravener not having had his gorge of him." This unconscionable tenant not only did nothing for the land, but misconducted himself scandalously, holding open house for his brothers and his sisters, his father and his father's friends, associating in the ale-houses with the scum of the neighbourhood, neglecting, and by-and-by refusing, to pay his rent, and when at last Landor lost patience, leaguing himself with other defaulting tenants, and with every malicious attorney and every thievish idler in the country side, to make his landlord's existence intolerable. Landor's rents were withheld, his game poached, his plantations damaged, his timber stolen, his character maligned, and even his life threatened. He was like a lion baited by curs. He was plunged up to the neck in law-suits. In the actions and counter-actions that were coming up for trial continually between himself and his tenants and neighbours, the local courts and juries were generally adverse to him, the local attorneys insolent. One of these on some unusual provocation Landor beat. "I treated him as he deserved. He brought a criminal action against me." In the case of a London counsel employed against him, Mr. (afterwards Judge) Taunton, Landor adopted a more innocuous, if to himself at least as gratifying, mode of revenge. "I would not encounter the rudeness I experienced from this Taunton, to save all the property I possess. I have, however, chastised him in my Latin verses now in the press." With reference to the criminal action pending on the part of the other and physically smarting man of law, he writes, "I shall be cited to take my trial at Monmouth; and as I certainly shall not appear I shall be outlawed." In the meantime, his prin-

cipal suit, for the recovery of nearly two thousand pounds due from Betham, had been successful, and his claim had been allowed by the Court of Exchequer to the last farthing. But it was too late. Ruin stared him in the face. He had sunk over seventy thousand pounds upon the Llanthony property in five years, and he had no ready money to meet the interest due on a mortgage. There were other equally urgent claims. The pressure of these, together with the probable results of his resolution not to appear to answer the charge against him at Monmouth, determined him, in May, 1814, to retreat to the Continent. His personal property, both in Wales and at Bath, was sold. The estate of Llanthony was taken by arrangement out of his hands, and vested in those of trustees. The life-charge in favour of his mother entitled her, fortunately, to the position of first creditor. She had an excellent talent for business, as had one at least of her younger sons, and Llanthony, under the management of its new trustees, soon proved able to yield a handsome enough provision for Landor's maintenance after all charges upon it had been satisfied. His half-built mansion was pulled down, and its remains only exist to-day in the guise of a hay-shed; while in the adjoining dingle the stream is all but dried up, and silent, as if its Naiad had fled with her master, while all the rest are vocal. The property still belongs to Landor's surviving son. His roads, and a good part of his plantations, still exist to bear witness to the energy of his years of occupation, and the beautiful Welsh valley will be for ever associated with his fame.

Landor sent to Southey from Weymouth on the 27th of May, 1814, a letter dejected and almost desperate, although written with his unfailing dignity of manner, in

which he speaks of his future as follows: "I go to-morrow to St. Malo. In what part of France I shall end my days I know not; but there I shall end them, and God grant that I may end them speedily, and so as to leave as little sorrow as possible to my friends. . . . . My wife follows when I have found a place fit for her reception. Adieu." But the cup of Landor's bitterness was not yet full. He sailed, in fact, not to St. Malo, but to Jersey, and was there joined by his wife and her young sister. Mrs. Landor disliked the plan of going to live in France, while Landor, on his part, was absolutely bent upon it. He desired that the question of changing their destination might not again be raised. She would not suffer the question to drop. Arguing one evening with more than usual petulance, she taunted him before her sister with their disparity of years. His pride took sudden fire; he rose at four the next morning, crossed the island on foot, and before noon was under weigh for the coast of France, in an oyster-boat, alone.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE AT TOURS—COMO—PISA—IDYLLIA HEROICA.

(1814—1821.)

Up to the date which we have now reached Landor's career seems to present a spectacle of almost as much futility as force. His resplendent gifts and lofty purposes had been attended with little solid result either in the practical or in the intellectual sphere. In the practical part of life he had indeed thus far conspicuously failed. The existence which he had realized for himself was one in which almost all his ideals were reversed. Bent upon walking in the paths of serenity, he had nevertheless trodden those of contention. Proudly exacting in his standard of intercourse and behaviour, he had been involved in ignominious wranglings with the base. Born to wealth, and eager to employ it for the public good, he had reaped nothing but frustration and embarrassment. Tenderly chivalrous towards women, he had just turned his back in anger upon his young wife. Neither in the other sphere of man's activity, the intellectual and imaginative sphere, which to him was in truth the more real and engrossing of the two, had Landor as yet done himself anything like full justice. Posterity, if his career had ended here, would probably have ignored his writings, or have remembered them at most as the fragmentary and imperfect pro-

ducts of a powerful spirit that had passed away without having left any adequate memorial. Several years had still to elapse before Landor addressed himself to that which was destined to be his great and vital task in literature, the writing of the *Imaginary Conversations*. His life until then continued to be unsettled, and his efforts uncertainly directed.

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they set off accordingly. They posted through France to Savoy, along a route beset on the right hand by the French forces, and on the left by the German army of occupation. An account of their journey is preserved in the letters written by Robert Landor to his mother, letters which betoken some measure both of chivalrous prejudice in favour of the pretty, reconciled, and now, as it would appear, somewhat ostentatiously meek and submissive sister-in-law, and of brotherly impatience with Walter's moods and caprices. When the travellers had made their way as far as Savoy Landor found himself enchanted with the scenery of that province, and for a moment thought of fixing his abode at Chambéry, but finally decided to push on into Italy. Before the end of the year he had arrived with his wife at Como, where he found himself disappointed and discontented at first, but where after a time he determined to settle down.

At Como Landor and his wife continued to live for the next three years. Before the summer of the third a boy was born to them, their first child, whom Landor christened Arnold Savage, after that Speaker of the House of Commons whom he conceived to be an ancestor of his own by the mother's side; other children, a girl and two more boys, followed within a few years. Landor delighted in the ways and company of children, and is the author of some of the most beautiful of all sayings about them. His own, as long as they were of tender age, were a source of extreme happiness to him; and their presence had for some years the effect of bringing peace at any rate, although no real concord, into his home relations. For the rest, in his life at Como as in his life at Llanthony, and indeed at all times, Landor was never so much taken up by anything as by his own reflexions,

and no company was so real to him as that with which he associated in imagination during his daily walks and nightly musings. In the way of practical contact with men during the period while he lived at Como there is not much to tell. Among his few visitors from abroad was "the learned and modest Bekker;" and he speaks of the "calm and philosophical Sironi" as his most frequent companion among the natives of the place. He had also some acquaintance in 1817 with an Englishman then resident near the lake, Sir Charles Wolseley, afterwards conspicuous as one of the leaders of the Birmingham reform agitation. They were both witnesses to the scandalous life led by the Princess of Wales in the villa on the lake where she was then residing; and Landor was, or imagined himself to be, subject to some insult or annoyance from those of her suite. "This alone," he wrote three years afterwards in his chivalrous way, when the same Sir Charles Wolseley brought forward his name as that of one in a position to give valuable evidence on her trial, "this alone, which might create and keep alive the most active resentment in others, would impose eternal silence on me." Of these and other matters Landor wrote frequently to Southey, whom he also kept supplied with presents of books, collected chiefly in the course of excursions to Milan. On his own account Landor was never much of a book collector, or rather he never kept many of the books he bought, but mastered, meditated, and then gave them away. It was always a matter of remark how disproportionate was the extent of his library to that of his reading. In the summer of 1817 Landor received a visit at Como from Southey in person. "Well do I remember," he makes Southey say in one of his subsequent *Imaginary Conversations*, "well do I remember our

long conversations in the silent and solitary church of Sant' Abondio (surely the coolest spot in Italy), and how often I turned back my head toward the open door, fearing lest some pious passer-by, or some more distant one in the wood above, pursuing the pathway that leads to the tower of Luitprand, should hear the roof echo with your laughter at the stories you had collected about the brotherhood and sisterhood of the place."

But Southey's spirits were on this occasion not what they had been in the old Llanthony days. He had lost his son Herbert, the darling of his heart, twelve months before, and had since suffered extreme vexation from the attacks and the rebuffs which he had undergone in connexion with the piratical publication of his *Wat Tyler*.

> Grief had swept over him ; days darken'd round :
> Bellagio, Valintelvi, smiled in vain,
> And Monte Rosa from Helvetia far
> Advanced to meet us, mild in majesty
> Above the glittering crests of giant sons
> Station'd around . . . in vain too ! all in vain.

Landor's stay at Como was brought to a characteristic termination in the autumn of 1818. An Italian poet, Monti, had written some disparaging verses against England. Landor instantly retorted with his old schoolboy weapons, and printed some opprobrious Latin verses on Monti, who summoned him before the local courts on a charge of libel. Thereupon he wrote to threaten the magistrate with a thrashing. For this he was ordered to quit the country, The time allowed him expired on the 19th of September. "I remained a week longer, rather wishing to be sent for to Milan." No such result ensuing, he retreated in a stately manner on the 28th, discharging more Latin verses as he went, this time against the Aus-

trian Governor, Count Strasoldo. The next two months he spent in a villa rented from the Marchese Pallavacini, at Albaro, near Genoa. Before the close of the year he had gone on with his family to Pisa.

At Pisa, with the exception of one summer, the first after his arrival, which he spent at Pistoia, Landor remained until September, 1821. It is a singular accident in the history of the famous little Tuscan city, that it should have been chosen by three of the most illustrious of modern Englishmen for their abode almost at the same time. Shelley established himself there in January, 1820, a year later than Landor; Byron in October, 1821, a month after Landor had left. With neither of these brother poets had Landor any personal acquaintance. The current slanders against Shelley's character, especially in connexion with the tragic issue of his first marriage, had been repeated to Landor by Mackintosh in a form which prevented him from seeking the younger poet's acquaintance, or even accepting it when it was offered, while they were both at Pisa. This Landor afterwards bitterly regretted. He had the heartiest admiration for Shelley's poetry, and learned when it was too late to admire his character no less. We cannot doubt that the two would have understood each other if they had met, and that between Landor, the loftiest and most massive spirit of his age, and Shelley, the most beautiful and ardent, there would have sprung up relations full of pleasure for themselves and of interest for posterity. For Byron, on the other hand, Landor had little admiration and less esteem. He had gone out of his way to avoid meeting him once in England. Neither is it certain that personal intercourse would have led to an improved understanding between them. Landor's fas-

tidious breeding might easily have taken umbrage at the strain of vulgarity there was in Byron; his pride at the other's trick of assumption; his sincerity at the other's affectations; especially if Byron had chosen to show, as he often did show with new acquaintances, his worst side first. And circumstances soon arose which would have made friendly intercourse between them harder than ever.

But before coming to these, it is necessary to fix in our minds the true nature of Landor's position, intellectual and personal, towards the two opposite parties into which the chief creative forces of English literature were at this time divided. One of these was a party of conservation and conformity, the other of expansion and revolt. To the conservative camp belonged the converted Jacobins Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, and, starting from a different point of departure, Scott; while the men of revolution were first of all Byron, now in the full blaze of his notoriety and his fame, and Shelley, whose name and writings were still comparatively unknown. The work of all creative spirits tends in the long-run towards expansion; towards the enrichment of human lives and the enlargement of human ideals. Wordsworth by his revelation of the living affinities between man and nature, and of the dignity of simple joys and passions, Coleridge by introducing into the inert mass of English orthodoxy and literalism the leaven of German transcendental speculation, Scott by kindling the dormant sympathy of the modern mind with past ages, lives, and customs, were perhaps each in his way doing as much to enrich the lives and enlarge the ideas of men as either Shelley, with his auroral visions of an emancipated future for the race, or Byron with his dazzling illustration of the principle of rebellion in his own person. But so far as concerns the religious, political,

and social forms surrounding them, the creative spirits, with the exception of a few who, like Keats, stand apart, "and simply sing the most heart-easing things," divide themselves, like other men, into two parties, one seeing nothing keenly but the good, and the other nothing keenly but the evil, in what is,—one fearing all, and the other hoping all, from change. The natural position of Landor was midway between the two. On the one hand, he was incapable of such parochial rusticity and narrowness as marked the judgments of Wordsworth in matters lying outside the peculiar kindling power of his genius; or of such vague, metaphysical reconciliations between the existing and the ideal as contented Coleridge; or of Southey's blind antagonism to change; or of Scott's romantic partiality for feudal and kingly forms and usages. But on the other hand Landor saw human nature, not in the ethereal, disembodied, iridescent semblance which it bore to the imagination of Shelley, but in its practical attributes of flesh and blood, and his watchwords by no means included, like those of the younger poet, the universal indignant rejection of all hereditary beliefs and bondages together. Neither did Landor, in sharing Byron's hatred of political tyranny and contempt for conventional judgments, indulge in anything like Byron's clamorous parade or cynic recklessness, but upheld and cherished whatever was really respectable in respectability, and maintained inviolate his antique principle of decorum even in rebellion. In spite of the turbulent reputation he had earned by his various collisions with authority, Landor regarded himself, to use his own words, as "radically a conservative in everything useful." In the matter of religious belief and practice he is commonly spoken of as a pagan, but his habits of thought were rather what are now-a-days termed posi-

tive; that is to say, he held the ultimate mysteries of the universe insoluble either by theology or philosophy, and estimated creeds and doctrines simply according to their effect on human happiness.

> Divinity is little worth having, much less paying for, unless she teaches humanity. The use of religion on earth is to inculcate the moral law; in other words, in the words of Jesus Christ, to love our neighbour as ourselves.

And again, in setting practical over doctrinal religion:—

> Christianity, as I understand it, lies not in belief but in action. That servant is a good servant who obeys the just orders of his master; not he who repeats his words, measures his stature, or traces his pedigree.

Accepting Christianity in this sense, Landor was never tired of enforcing the contrast between the practical religion of the gospels and the official and doctrinal religion of priests and kings. In like manner as regards philosophy; for abstract and metaphysical speculations he had no sympathy, scarcely even any toleration.

> The business of philosophy is to examine and estimate all those things which come within the cognizance of the understanding. Speculations on any that lie beyond are only pleasant dreams, leaving the mind to the lassitude of disappointment. They are easier than geometry and dialectics; they are easier than the efforts of a well-regulated imagination in the structure of a poem.

To the same purport, Diogenes is made to reply to Plato:—

> I meddle not at present with infinity or eternity; when I can comprehend them, I will talk about them. You metaphysicians kill the flower-bearing and fruit-bearing glebe with delving, and turning over, and sifting, and never bring up any solid and malleable mass from the dark profundity in which

you labour. The intellectual world, like the physical, is inapplicable to profit and incapable of cultivation a little way below the surface.

Neither could Landor admit that philosophy even in the sense above defined, that is philosophy dealing with the facts of life and experience, could be profitably pursued apart from directly practical issues. Human welfare, and not abstract truth, should be its aim.

This is philosophy, to make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful, useful things extensively common, and to leave the least necessary for the last. . . . . Truth is not reasonably the main and ultimate object of philosophy; philosophy should seek truth merely as the means of acquiring and propagating happiness.

In politics Landor was by no means the mere rebel which a saying of Carlyle's, repeated by Emerson, has tended to represent him. He was indeed the staunchest friend of liberty, understanding by liberty the right of every human being "to enjoy his reason for the promotion of his happiness;" and the most untiring enemy of all forms of despotism, usurpation, persecution, or corruption which in his view interfered with that right. Beyond this, he was far from being in any general sense a political innovator or leveller. With democracy he had no sympathy, regarding that majority of all ranks whom he called "the vulgar" as of infinitely less importance in a commonwealth than its two or three great men. "A mob," he says, "is not worth a man." Accordingly, he was no great believer in popular suffrage, and would on no account condescend to personal contact with its processes and instruments. He prided himself on never having made use of the votes which he possessed in four counties, or entered a club, or been present at a political meeting. Revolu-

tionist as he was in regard to the despotic governments of the continent, convinced as he always continued to be of the schoolboy doctrine of the virtue of tyrannicide, he advocated no very sweeping reforms in the politics of his native country. He would "change little, but correct much." He believed greatly in the high qualities of his own order, the untitled gentry of England, and was fond of scheming such a reform of the peerage as should convert that body from a more or less corrupt and degenerate oligarchy into a genuine aristocracy of worth and talent. He was, as we have seen, a great denouncer of what he thought the trucklings, derogations, and quackeries of ordinary political practice and partisanship; but his chief practical exhortations were against wars of conquest and annexation; against alliance with the despotic powers for the suppression of insurgent nationalities; against the over-endowment of ecclesiastical dignitaries; in favour of the removal of Catholic disabilities; in favour of factory acts, of the mitigation of the penal laws, and of ecclesiastical and agrarian legislation for the relief of the Irish.

If Landor by his general opinions thus stood midway between the conservative and revolutionary groups of his contemporaries, we have seen already on which side of the two his literary sympathies were engaged. He belonged to the generation of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Charles Lamb, and had grown up in admiration of the writings of the so-called Lake school for years before their light was dimmed by the younger star of Byron. At the same time, Landor was essentially the reverse of a partisan; his literary judgments were perfectly open, and he was nobly eager to acknowledge merit whenever he could perceive it. If he can be charged with

partisanship in any instance, it is in that of Southey, whom he placed as a poet not only far above his young antagonist Byron, but above Wordsworth also. For this mistake, Landor's loyal and devoted friendship is undoubtedly in part responsible. As between Southey and Byron, however, we must remember that the excellencies of the one and the faults of the other were precisely of the kind most calculated to impress Landor. He looked in literature first of all to the technical points of form and workmanship; Southey was one of the soundest and most scrupulous of workmen; Byron one of the most impetuous and lax; and considering how rarely poets have ever judged aright of each other, how hard it is for any man ever to judge aright of a contemporary, we shall not too much wonder if Landor failed to see that the skilful, versatile, level, industrious poetry of Southey contained nothing which would strongly interest a second generation, while that of the other, with its glaring faults, its felicities that seem so casual even when they are most irresistible, its headlong current over rough and smooth, was the utterance of a personality that would impress and fascinate posterity to the latest day.

All these relations of Landor to his contemporaries come into the light in the course of his correspondence and his work at Pisa. His intercourse with Southey, in the shape of letters and consignments of books, is as close as ever. We find him also in correspondence with Wordsworth himself, on terms of great mutual respect and courtesy. On the literary controversies of the hour Landor printed some just and striking observations, although in a form which prevented them from making any impression on the public mind, in a book published at Pisa in 1820. This was the volume called *Idyllia*

Heroica, containing the carefully matured fruits of all his Latin studies and exercises during many years past. The earlier Oxford edition, printed, as we have seen, about the time Landor was leaving Llanthony, had contained, besides other miscellaneous matter, five heroic tales or idyls in hexameter verse; this Pisa edition contains ten, most of which Landor afterwards turned into English for his volume entitled *Hellenics*, and upwards of fifty sets of hendecasyllabics. Like all the really original writing of the moderns in this language, Landor's Latin poems are not easy reading. His style is completely personal, as indeed we should expect from a scholar who used Latin often by preference for the expression of his most intimate thoughts and feelings; it does not recall the diction or cadences of any given master; it is not perfectly free from grammatical and prosodial slips; but it is remarkably spontaneous, energetic, and alive. The volume concludes with a long critical essay, developed from the *Quæstiuncula* of 1803, on the cultivation and use of Latin—*De cultu atque usu Latini sermonis.*

This essay contains much that would, if Landor had only written it in his noble English instead of his only less noble Latin, have counted among his most interesting work. He has written, he says, because too much leisure is prejudicial alike to virtue and to happiness; and he has published his work in Italy because he desires to avoid being confounded by those among whom he is sojourning with the promiscuous crowd of travelling Englishmen (*quia nolui* turmalis *esse, nolui opinione hominum cum cæteris Britannnorum peregrinantium, cujuscumque sint ordinis, conturbari*). His avowed purpose is the paradoxical one of pleading for the Latin language as that proper to be used by all civilized nations for the expres-

sion of their most dignified and durable thoughts. Why should those be called the dead languages which alone will never die? Why should any one choose to engrave on glass when it is open to him to engrave on beryl-stone? What literary pleasure can be so great to a man as that of composing in the language of his earliest and most fruitful lessons? English, even English, may decay, for there are signs abroad of the decadence of England's polity, and that of her language cannot fail to follow; but Latin has survived and will continue to survive all the vicissitudes of time. And much more to the same effect; to which is added a condensed critical narrative of the history of Latin poetry since the Renaissance, bespeaking a prodigious familiarity with a literature to most people neither familiar nor interesting. This is interspersed with criticisms, in like manner succinct and authoritative, on the principal poets of ancient Rome, and with many searching observations, both general and analytic, on the poets and poetry of England. Landor has also his fling at France, remarking how the once vaunted *Henriade* of Voltaire has sunk to the level of a lesson-book for teaching heroic metre—and heroic patience—to the young; but contrasting, on the other hand, the treatment of poets in France, where every man takes to himself a share of their glory, with their treatment in England, where no man will tolerate any poetic glory except his own. In the course of the discussion Landor finds occasion for several of his striking sentences—as this, that every great poet is in some sort the creator of that man who appreciates the delights of the Paradise prepared by him (*magnus poeta quisque creator hominis istius qui, liceat ita dicere, Paradiso suo fruatur*).

With reference to the English writers of his own day, Landor has a fine and on the whole a just outburst against

the Broughams, Jeffreys, and their meaner rivals or satellites in the trade of criticism as then practised; followed by an apostrophe to Wordsworth—"admirable man, citizen, philosopher, poet!"—whom neither seclusion, nor dignity of life, nor the common reverence of men, has been able to protect from the virulence of these enemies of all good men and writers. And yet, if only he had been dead before they were born, these same traducers would have been the foremost to bring their incense to his tomb. Coming to Byron, Landor begins with the saying that the greatest poets have in all times been good men, and there is no worse mistake than to suppose vice the natural concomitant of genius. But most men prefer the second-best to the best; and when there appears a writer of talent and fertility, whose life and style are alike full of showy faults, he is sure of notoriety and acclamation. The true advice for him is to mend his morals, to be more careful of his style, to control the ardours of his temperament, to rush less hastily into print, and then by the time he is forty he may well produce something epical and truly great (*ingens nescio quid et vere epicum*). The passage is far from being either unkind or unjust. Southey in the next year quoted it, adding words expressive of his enthusiastic regard and admiration for its author, in a note to the preface of his *Vision of Judgment*. This is the preface in which Southey made his famous attack upon Byron and the "Satanic school;" an attack which, with the inconceivably unlucky performance which followed it in the shape of an apotheosis of George III. in lumbering and lame hexameters, gave Byron, who, as he said, "liked a row," an opportunity too good to be lost. We all know the consequences. If Southey's attack is remembered, it is because of Byron's never-to-be-forgotten

retort. I speak, not of the prose correspondence, in which Byron with his sneers and his unfairness makes no such honourable figure as his injudicious but sincerely indignant and perfectly loyal antagonist; but of Byron's own poetic, mocking, and immortal *Vision*. In a note to this Byron dealt a passing thrust at the laureate's incongruous friend Savagius, or Savage Landor—"such is his grim cognomen"—"who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses," and whose opinion of his late sovereign was so strikingly at variance with that of his friend. Byron next returned to the charge against Landor in a note to *The Island*. Having in this poem avowedly paraphrased Landor's lines upon a sea-shell in *Gebir*, which he had heard Shelley recite, Byron takes occasion to declare that he has never read the poem, and to quote Gifford's opinion that the rest of it is "trash of the worst and most insane description." Then again there are the well-known lines in Don Juan,—

> And that deep-mouthed Beotian Savage Landor
> Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

"Deep-mouthed" is good; and in all this there was much more mischief than malice on Byron's part. His account of his real feelings towards Landor is extant, in the diluted report of Lady Blessington, as follows:—

> At Pisa, a friend told me that Walter Savage Landor had declared he either would not or could not read my works. I asked my officious friend if he was sure which it was that Landor said, as the *would not* was not offensive, and the *could not* was highly so. After some reflection, he, of course *en ami*, chose the most disagreeable signification; and I marked down Landor in the tablet of memory as a person to whom a *coup-de-patte* must be given in my forthcoming work, though he

really is a man whose brilliant talents and profound erudition I cannot help admiring as much as I respect his character.

Landor's retort to the Byronic *coups-de-patte* appeared presently in the shape of an apologue, in one of his *Conversations*, where the personage of Byron is shadowed forth under that of Mr. George Nelly, an imaginary son of Lord Rochester's :—

Whenever he wrote a bad poem, he supported his sinking fame by some signal act of profligacy, an elegy by a seduction, an heroic by an adultery, a tragedy by a divorce. On the remark of a learned man, that irregularity is no indication of genius, he began to lose ground rapidly, when on a sudden he cried out at the Haymarket, *There is no God.* It was then surmised more generally and more gravely that there was something in him, and he stood upon his legs almost to the last. *Say what you will,* once whispered a friend of mine, *there are things in him strong as poison, and original as sin.*

The subjects discussed in Landor's Latin essay had been literary alone. But other things besides literature occupied his thoughts in these years at Pisa. In 1819 and the following years began the first stirrings of those political movements which are not ended yet—the first uprisings, after the settlement of 1815, of the spirit of liberty and nationality against dynasties and despotisms. The Spanish republics of South America had struck for freedom against the mother country; the Spaniards themselves next rose against their king, the restored and perjured Ferdinand; the flame spread to Italy, where the flag of revolt was raised against the Bourbons in Naples and the Austrians in Lombardy, and to Greece, where peasant and brigand, trader and pirate, women and children, young and old, on a sudden astonished the world with deeds of

desperate and successful heroism against the Turk. All these movements Landor followed with passionate sympathy, and with corresponding detestation the measures of the Holy Alliance for their repression, the deliberations of the Congress of Verona, and the French invasion of Spain. Canning's tentative and half-hearted efforts in the cause of liberty he condemned scarcely less than the despotic predilections of Castlereagh. He would have had England strike everywhere for the oppressed against the oppressor. His own Spanish title and decoration Landor had indignantly sent back on the violation by Ferdinand of his Charter. He now (1821) addressed to the people of Italy an essay or oration on representative government, written in their own language, which he by this time wrote and spoke with freedom, though his speaking accent was strongly English to the last. From these years date many of the thoughts and feelings to which he gave expression during those next ensuing in his political dialogues.

Poems like Shelley's *Hellas* and his *Ode to Naples* have their counterpart in the work of Landor in two pieces inspired at this time by the European, and especially the Greek, revolution. One is addressed *to Corinth;* the other is called *Regeneration;* both illustrate the noblest altitudes—and, at the same time, it must be said, the curious baldnesses and depressions—of which Landor's poetic thought and poetic style were capable. I quote the best part of the second. The reference towards the end is to the destruction of the Turkish fleet by Canaris with his two fire-ships and handful of men.

We are what suns and winds and waters make us
The mountains are our sponsors, and the rills
Fashion and win their nursling with their smiles.
But where the land is dim from tyranny,

There tiny pleasures occupy the place
Of glories and of duties; as the feet
Of fabled faeries when the sun goes down
Trip o'er the grass where wrestlers strove by day.
Then Justice, call'd the Eternal One above,
Is more inconstant than the buoyant form
That bursts into existence from the froth
Of ever-varying ocean: what is best
Then becomes worst; what loveliest, most deform'd.
The heart is hardest in the softest climes,
The passions flourish, the affections die.
O thou vast tablet of these awful truths
That fillest all the space between the seas,
Spreading from Venice's deserted courts
To the Tarentine and Hydruntine moles,
What lifts thee up? what shakes thee? 'tis the breath
Of God. Awake, ye nations! spring to life!
Let the last work of his right hand appear
Fresh with his image, Man. Thou recreant slave
That sittest afar off and helpest not,
O thou degenerate Albion! with what shame
Do I survey thee, pushing forth the spunge
At thy spear's length, in mockery at the thirst
Of holy Freedom in his agony,
And prompt and keen to pierce the wounded side.
Must Italy then wholly rot away
Amid her slime, before she germinate
Into fresh vigour, into form again?
What thunder bursts upon mine ear? some isle
Hath surely risen from the gulphs profound,
Eager to suck the sunshine from the breast
Of beauteous Nature, and to catch the gale
From golden Hermus and Melena's brow.
A greater thing than isle, than continent,
Than earth itself, than ocean circling earth,
Hath risen there; regenerate Man hath risen.
Generous old bard of Chios! not that Jove
Deprived thee in thy latter days of sight
Would I complain, but that no higher theme

Than a disdainful youth, a lawless king,
A pestilence, a pyre, awoke thy song,
When on the Chian coast, one javelin's throw
From where thy tombstone, where thy cradle stood,
Twice twenty self-devoted Greeks assail'd
The naval host of Asia, at one blow
Scattered it into air . . . and Greece was free . . .
And ere these glories beam'd, thy day had closed.
Let all that Elis ever saw, give way,
All that Olympian Jove e'er smiled upon :
The Marathonian columns never told
A tale more glorious, never Salamis,
Nor, faithful in the centre of the false,
Platea, nor Anthela, from whose mount
Benignant Ceres wards the blessed Laws,
And sees the Amphictyon dip his weary foot
In the warm streamlet of the straits below.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE AT FLORENCE—THE IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS.

(1821—1829.)

BOTH in telling of Landor's literary collisions with Byron, and in tracing the course of his sympathies with the insurgent populations of Southern Europe, we have been led beyond the strict limits of his stay at Pisa. He left that city in September 1821; and left, it, strange to say, at peace, having had only one slight brush with authority, and that only with the censorship of the press, concerning a line in one of his Latin poems. He went next to Florence, where he established himself with his family in a handsome suite of apartments in the Medici palace. Here he lived for five years, and for the three following principally in a country house, the Villa Castiglione, distant half an hour's walk from the same city.

During these eight years Landor was engaged, to the exclusion of nearly all other work, with the production of his *Imaginary Conversations.* The experimental part of his literary career had now ended, and the period of solid and confident production had begun. He had found the form and mode of expression that best suited his genius. The idea of writing prose dialogues or conversations between illustrious personages of the past was no new one in his mind. In the days of his connexion with

Whig journalism twenty years before, he had offered to Adair for insertion in the *Morning Chronicle* a dialogue between Burke and Grenville, which had been declined. He had about the same time written another between Henry IV. and Arnold Savage. After that he had never regularly resumed this form of composition until towards the date of his departure from Pisa. But it was a form congenial to every habit of his mind. The greatness of great characters was what most impressed him in the world. Their exploits and sufferings, their potencies of intellect and will, the operation of their influence and example, were for him the essence of history. He could not bring himself to regard statistical or social facts, or the working of collective or impersonal forces in human affairs, as deserving from the historian any commensurate degree of attention with the lives and achievements of individuals. In this temper of hero-worship Landor was a true disciple of antiquity, and he regarded the whole field of history from the ancient point of view. The extraordinary range and thoroughness of his reading made him familiar with all the leading figures of Time. His dramatic instinct prompted him to reanimate them in thought with the features and the accents of life. It was in converse with these mute companions that he was accustomed to spend the best part of his days and nights. "Even those with whom I have not lived, and whom indeed I have never seen, affect me by sympathy as if I had known them intimately, and I hold with them in my walks many imaginary conversations." Elsewhere Landor adorns and amplifies in his choicest vein this account of his own habits, in order to transfer it to the lips of Petrarch. "When I was younger I was fond of wandering in solitary places, and never was afraid of slumbering in

woods and grottoes. Among the chief pleasures of my life, and among the commonest of my occupations, was the bringing before me such heroes and heroines of antiquity, such poets and sages, such of the prosperous and the unfortunate, as most interested me by their courage, their eloquence, or their adventures. Engaging them in the conversations best suited to their characters, I knew perfectly their manners, their steps, their voices: and often did I moisten with my tears the models I had been forming of the less happy."

If it was thus an essential habit of Landor's mind to think about persons, and dramatically, to think in fragments, and disconnectedly, was not less so. In his mental communion with the heroes and heroines of the past, he began by framing for them isolated thoughts and sentences, led them on next to an interchange of several, and added more by degrees until the whole scene was filled out. He confesses as much himself, in a metaphor which is characteristic also of his tastes as a lover of trees and planting. "I confess to you that a few detached thoughts and images have always been the beginnings of my works. Narrow slips have risen up, more or fewer, above the surface. These gradually became larger and more consolidated; freshness and verdure first covered one part, then another; then plants of firmer and higher growth, however scantily, took their places, then extended their roots and branches; and among them, and around about them, in a little while you yourself, and as many more as I desired, found places for study and recreation." Dialogue is a form of literature in which all these peculiarities could find play, not only without impediment but with advantage. Accordingly Landor was himself astonished at the abundance and the satisfaction with which he found

himself pouring out his intellectual stores in this form when he had once begun. He was moved to do so partly by the correspondence of Southey, who was full at this time of a projected book of *Colloquies* of his own; and partly by the conversation and encouragement of Francis Hare. Landor had no idea at the outset how far his new literary enterprise was destined to carry him. He still meditated, as the great work of his life, a history to be written either in co-operation with Southey or separately. This idea of working in conjunction with Southey, long and seriously entertained by Landor, is a signal proof, coming from a mind so rooted in independence and self-sufficiency as his, of his unbounded and deferential regard for his friend. The idea was gradually and naturally dropped somewhat later, and Landor conceived instead that of writing by himself, in the form of a series of letters, a systematic commentary on the history of England from the year 1775. In the meantime he laboured impetuously at his dialogues. He had before him the examples of many illustrious writers in all ages; of Plato, Xenophon, and Lucian, of Cicero and Boethius, of Erasmus and More; and, among English authors of comparatively recent date, those of Langhorne, Lyttelton, and Hurd. It is needless to say that he did not closely follow, much less imitate, any of his predecessors. He was not at first sure of the method to be adopted, and began by planning set conversations on particular texts and topics. This was soon given up, and he wrote according to the choice or the preoccupation of the moment. For fear of being at any time caught echoing either the matter or the manner of any other writer, he used to abstain altogether from reading before he himself began to compose, "lest the theme should haunt me, and

some of the ideas take the liberty of playing with mine. I do not wish the children of my brain to imitate the gait or learn any tricks of others." By the 9th of March, 1822, he had finished fifteen dialogues, and burnt two others which had failed to satisfy him. The manuscript of the fifteen he consigned not many days later by a private hand to Longmans, to whom he at the same time addressed his proposals for their publication.

The parcel was delayed in delivery, and no answer reached Landor for more than three months. Long before that his impatience had risen to boiling-point. He rushed headlong to the direst conclusions. Of course the manuscript had been lost; or of course it had been refused; or both; and it was just like his invariable ill-fortune. He was in despair. He took to his bed. He swore he would never write another line, and burnt what he had got by him already written. "This disappointment has brought back my old bilious complaint, together with the sad reflection on that fatality which has followed me through life, of doing everything in vain. I have, however, had the resolution to tear in pieces all my sketches and projects, and to forswear all future undertakings. I try to sleep away my time, and pass two-thirds of the twenty-four hours in bed. I may speak of myself as of a dead man. I will say, then, that these *Conversations* contained as forcible writing as exists on earth."

This was early in June, and it was not until the end of August that news of the manuscript at last arrived. In the meantime Landor had recovered his equanimity, and was busy writing new dialogues and making additions to the old. Longmans in fact refused the book. A whole succession of other publishers to whom it was offered either refused it also, or else offered terms which were

unacceptable. By this time, however, Landor was again too deeply engrossed with the work of writing to bestow much attention or indignation upon such impediments. He had now put everything concerned with the publication into the hands of Julius Hare, to whom he was as yet known only through his brother Francis, but who eagerly undertook and loyally discharged the task. Hare, then a tutor at Trinity College, Cambridge, persuaded a publisher named Taylor, with whom he was on terms of personal friendship, to take up the book; the profits or losses, if any, to be shared equally between author and publisher. Presently there arose differences between Taylor and Hare about the suppression of words or passages which the former judged exceptionable. First Wordsworth, then Southey, was proposed as umpire in these differences, Southey finally agreeing to undertake the office; but even against Southey Taylor adhered to some of his objections. All this occasioned considerable delay. In the meantime the rumour of the forthcoming book aroused no slight degree of expectation. As a foretaste of its contents the critical dialogue between Southey and Porson on the merits of Wordsworth's poetry was published by agreement in one of the monthly reviews in 1823. The best judges were interested and struck, and Wordsworth himself much gratified. Landor's original intention had been to dedicate his book to Wordsworth, and his announcement of the fact had been received by the poet with the utmost pleasure. But while the volumes were in the press it seemed to Landor that some of his expressions against those in authority were stronger than could be pleasing to one of Wordsworth's opinions; so with courteous explanations he changed his purpose, and when the book at last appeared, in 1824, its two volumes were dedicated respec-

tively, the first to the husband of his wife's sister, Major-General Stopford; the second to a soldier of liberty, General Mina, the champion of the popular cause in Spain. In the course of a preface prefixed to the first volume Landor describes his present purposes in literature as follows:—"Should health and peace of mind remain to me, and the enjoyment of a country where, if there are none to assist at least there is none to molest me, I hope to leave behind me completed the great object of my studies, an orderly and solid work in history; and I cherish the persuasion that Posterity will not confound me with the Coxes and Foxes of the age."

In the two volumes thus produced and prefaced, dialogues the most dissimilar in subject, and the most various in the personages introduced, are brought together without system or connexion. Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney discourse on letters and morality beneath the oaks of Penshurst. Richard I. encounters his faithful Abbot of Boxley on the road by Hagenau. Southey recites to Porson the *Laodamia* of Wordsworth, and they criticize its beauties and shortcomings. Æschines and Phocion discuss the character of Demosthenes and the prospects of Greece on one page, and on the next Queen Elizabeth banters Cecil on his slight esteem for poetry and poets. General Kleber opens the locket and the letter taken from the body of an English officer killed in wantonness by the French during the war in Egypt. Demosthenes discusses policy and oratory with his teacher Eubulides, and Buonaparte receives the adulations of the Senate through its president. Milton converses with Andrew Marvel on the forms and varieties of comedy and tragedy, and Washington with Franklin on the causes and conduct of the war between the American colonies and the mother country,

and on the political prospects of each in the future. Roger Ascham warns his lovely pupil, Lady Jane Grey, of the perils that await her after her marriage. The wisdom of Bacon and of Hooker are exhibited together, and the worldliness of the one set in contrast to the piety of the other. The extravagances of despotism and of superstition are set forth in a vein of Aristophanic caricature in a conversation of Louis XIV. with his confessor. Pericles and Sophocles walk and talk amid the new-limned and new-carven glories of the Acropolis. The prospects of revolutionary Spain and revolutionary Greece, and the duties of the European powers to both, are discussed in a dialogue of General Lacy with the Cura Merino, and another of Prince Mavrocordato with Colocotroni. The Scotch philosopher and the Scotch poet, Hume and Home, converse of their own problematic relationship, of orthodoxy, and of toleration. Henry VIII. intrudes suddenly upon his cast-off wife, Anne Boleyn, in the days just before her execution. Cicero moralizes with his brother Quinctus concerning life, death, friendship, and glory, on the eve of his last birthday. The seditious Tooke wins from the Tory Johnson a kindly hearing for his views on English language and orthography, views which in fact are Landor's own, and the effect of which makes itself practically perceived in the spelling both of this and of his other published writings, earlier and later. In his own person Landor appears as interlocutor in two dialogues; one principally on architecture and gardening, held with his landlord at Genoa; the other on poetry, criticism, and Boileau with the French translator of Milton, the Abbé Delille. Interspersed are supplementary notes and dissertations in Landor's customary vein of mingled whim and wisdom, of ardent enthusiasm and lofty scorn,

all conveyed in the same dignified, sedate, authoritative tones. Finally, "as a voluntary to close the work," he appends the poem on the Greek and Italian revolutions of which we have quoted a part above.

The book made when it appeared no great impression on the popular mind, but upon that of students and lovers of high literature one as strong at least as Landor's friends expected. He could no longer be charged with cultivating private renown among a select band of admirers. He had challenged the general verdict over an extensive field of thought and imagination. The verdict of the critics, in that age of carping and cudgelling literary partisanship, could not be expected to be unanimous, least of all in the case of a writer of judgments so decisive and opinions so untempered as Landor. Jeffrey only allowed Hazlitt to notice the book in the *Edinburgh Review* when he had ascertained that the enthusiastic opinion which Hazlitt had formed of Landor's powers of mind and style, and of the beauty of particular dialogues, was qualified by strong disapproval of many of his opinions, especially of his opinions on Buonaparte; and even then Jeffrey cut and modified his contributor's work, so that the article as it appeared was of a very mixed character. The *Quarterly* as a matter of course was hostile; but the sting had been taken out of Quarterly hostility by a dexterous stroke of friendship on the part of Julius Hare. This was a criticism which Hare published in the *London Review* just before the appearance of the *Quarterly*, and in which he anticipated all the reprehensions of the Tory oracle, putting them into the mouth of an imaginary interlocutor whom he calls Hargreaves, and represents as a cynical, scribbling barrister, and himself traversing and over-riding them. From Southey and Wordsworth there came,

written on a single sheet, a letter of thanks and praise which Landor greatly cherished. It was felt and said, among those who have the right to speak for futurity, that a new classic had arisen. One thing at any rate there was no gainsaying, and that was the excellence of Landor's English, the strength, dignity, and harmony of his prose style, qualities in which he was obviously without a living rival. For the first time, Landor was able to anticipate a certain measure of profit from his work. Both to profit and popularity, indeed, he was accustomed to express an indifference which was quite sincere; but the encouragement of his peers added a real zest to the continuance of his labours. Almost before the first edition had appeared, he had prepared materials for its expansion in a second, to consist of three volumes instead of two. He kept forwarding corrections and insertions for the original dialogues, the latter including some of the best matter which they contain in the form which we now possess. Thus to the dialogue of the Ciceros he added the allegory of Truth, the most perfect, I think, next to one (and that also is by Landor) in the English language; to that of Lacy and Merino, the grandest of all his outbursts concerning the principles of English policy abroad; and even to the brief, high-pitched, and high-wrought dialogues of Lady Jane Grey and Anne Boleyn, a page or two each. To the passage on Mr. George Nelly the death of Byron, which had happened about the time of its original publication, induces Landor to append this noble palinode :—

If, before the dialogue was printed, he had performed those services to Greece, which will render his name illustrious to eternity, those by which he merited such funereal honours as, in the parsimony of praise, knowing its value in republics, she hardly would have decreed to the most deserving of her

heroes; if, I repeat it, he had performed those services, the performance of which I envy him from my soul, and as much as any other does the gifts of heaven he threw away so carelessly, never would I, from whatever provocation, have written a syllable against him. I had avoided him; I had slighted him; he knew it. He did not love me; he could not. While he spoke or wrote against me, I said nothing in print or conversation; the taciturnity of pride gave way to other feelings when my friends, men so much better and (let the sincerity of the expression be questioned by those who are unacquainted with us) so much dearer, so much oftener in my thoughts, were assailed by him too intemperately.

Landor's materials for his third volume comprised no less than twenty dialogues, including one very long, rambling, and heterogeneous, between the Duc de Richelieu, a vulgar Irish woman of title, a general also Irish, and a virtuous English schoolmaster turned sailor. With this were associated some of Landor's best brief dialogues of character and passion, notably the Roman two of Marcellus with Hannibal and Tiberius with Vipsania; several of his monumental satires against tyranny and superstition, including the terrible dialogue of Peter the Great with his son Alexis, and the playful one of Bossuet and the Duchesse de Fontanges; a discussion between Rousseau and Malesherbes, which is one of the best of the modern meditative class; a visit of Joseph Scaliger to Montaigne, the latter a personage for whom Landor entertained a peculiar sympathy and admiration; and among the ancients a remonstrance of the poet Anacreon with the tyrant Polycrates, a contrast of the true stoic Epictetus with the false stoic Seneca, and a second conversation of Demosthenes and Eubulides. Himself Landor introduced as conversing with an English and a Florentine visitor on the death and the virtues of the Grand Duke Ferdinand

of Tuscany, on politics and poetry, and especially on the fates and genius of Keats and Shelley.

If anything could engage me to visit Rome again, to endure the sight of her scarred and awful ruins, telling their stories on the ground in the midst of bell-ringers and pantomimes; if I could let charnel-houses and opera-houses, consuls and popes, tribunes and cardinals, senatorial orators and preaching friars, clash in my mind; it would be that I might afterwards spend an hour in solitude, where the pyramid of Cestius stands against the wall, and points to the humbler tombs of Keats and Shelley.

* * * * * *

Keats, in his *Endymion*, is richer in imagery than either [Chaucer or Burns]: and there are passages in which no poet has arrived at the same excellence on the same ground. Time alone was wanting to complete a poet, who already far surpassed all his contemporaries in this country in the poet's most noble attributes. . . . . . We will now return to Shelley. Innocent and careless as a boy, he possessed all the delicate feelings of a gentleman, all the discrimination of a scholar, and united, in just degrees, the ardour of the poet with the patience and forbearance of the philosopher. His generosity and charity went far beyond those of any man (I believe) at present in existence. He was never known to speak evil of an enemy, unless that enemy had done some grievous injustice to another: and he divided his income of only one thousand pounds with the fallen and afflicted.

After expressing his deep regret at the misunderstanding which had kept them strangers, Landor concludes :—

As to what remains of him now life is over, he occupies the third place among the poets of the present age, and is incomparably the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose writers.

Landor's implied order among the poets in the above words is, strange as it may seem, Southey, Wordsworth,

Shelley. Republishing the conversation twenty years later, he varies the last words as follows :—

"He occupies, if not the highest, almost the highest, place among our poets of the present age; no humble station; and is among the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose writers."

With reference to his own position among his fellow-writers, Landor is as totally and cordially free from jealousy as it is possible for a man to be. At the same time he has no doubts; and the text or notes of these personal dialogues occasionally contain a remark in the following stately key,—"What I write is not written on slate, and no finger, not of Time himself, who dips it in the clouds of years, can efface it;" and occasionally a derisive challenge to his reviewers,—let the sturdiest of them take the ten worst of his dialogues, "and if he equals them in ten years I will give him a hot wheaten roll and a pint of brown stout for breakfast."

Landor panted for the immediate publication of his new edition, but was again foiled by his own impetuosity. Some want of tact in a letter of Taylor's, some slight delays of payment and correspondence on his part, together with the irritation Landor had not unnaturally felt under his timorous censorship, led to an outbreak which made all future relations between them impossible. Landor's annoyance and his suspicions having been inflamed in the course of conversation with Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, his imagination swiftly added fuel to the fire, and he presently exploded, writing to accuse Taylor of every kind of misconduct, and proclaiming every kind of desperate resolution in consequence. "His first villainy instigated me to throw my fourth volume, in its imperfect state, into the fire, and has cost me nine-tenths of my fame as a writer.

His next villainy will entail perhaps a chancery suit on my children—for at its commencement I blow my brains out. This cures me for ever, if I live, of writing what could be published; and I will take good care that my son shall not suffer in the same way. Not a line of any kind will I leave behind me. My children shall be carefully warned against literature." Was ever ancient Roman so forgetful of himself? Was ever overgrown schoolboy so incorrigible?

Landor's "for ever" rarely lasted more than a few weeks, and it is to his credit that when Julius Hare replied to all this with a perfectly manly and straightforward letter of remonstrance, justifying his friend Taylor in all but a few unimportant particulars, Landor received the rebuke in silence, and continued to entrust to Hare the farther arrangements concerning his book. The materials intended for his fourth volume he had, as we have just read, destroyed. But within a few months more he had produced new dialogues enough not only for one, but for two, additional volumes, and in the meantime another publisher had been found in the person of Colburn. Landor's share of the profits on his first edition had been a hundred and seventy pounds odd. For the second edition he received in advance two hundred pounds. Its first two volumes appeared in 1826; the third, the new volume, dedicated to Bolivar, not until 1828, and these three volumes were now regarded as constituting the "first series" of the work. Some fresh slight disagreements having arisen, the fourth and fifth volumes, comprising the "second series," were entrusted to yet another publisher, Duncan, and appeared in 1829. These two new volumes contain between them twenty-seven more dialogues of the old diversified character. That of Lucullus

and Cæsar is the loftiest, most thoughtful, and urbane, next to that of the two Ciceros, among the more tranquil of Landor's Roman dialogues. The conversation of Diogenes and Plato, allowing for the peculiar view which Landor had formed of Plato's character and genius, is at once the most pungent and the most majestic of the Greek. In the dialogue of Metellus and Marius at the walls of Numantia, Landor embodies with masterly imagination the inexorable spirit of Roman conquest; in that of Leofric and Godiva the charm of bridal tenderness and the invincibility of womanly compassion; in that of Lady Lisle and Lady Elizabeth Gaunt, condemned to death during the bloody assize for sheltering the partisans of Monmouth, the constancy of martyrdom and the divine persistence of more than Christian forgiveness. Landor's own favourite conversation of all was that in which the philosopher Epicurus instructs at once in wisdom and in dalliance his girl-pupils Leontion and Ternissa. A scarcely less ideal charm is breathed by Landor over the relations of his own contemporary Trelawny with the daughter of the Klepht leader Odysseus, in the introduction of a dialogue which turns afterwards on the discussion of European, and especially of Greek, politics. In a short scene between Peleus and Thetis he unites with the full charm of Hellenic mythology the full vividness of human passion. Satirical conversations between the French ministers Villèle and Corbière, the English Pitt and Canning, and the Portuguese Prince Miguel and his mother, give vent more or less felicitously to his illimitable contempt for the ministers and ruling families of modern states.

Besides the contents of these five volumes, written and published between the years 1821 and 1829, and containing in all about eighty *Conversations*, Landor had before

the latter date written some twenty more, which he intended for publication in a sixth. But from one reason and another this sixth volume never appeared, and the materials which should have composed it were for the most part only made public in the collected edition of Landor's writings issued in 1846. Counting these, and the increase in the number of the original dialogues effected by dividing some of them into two, and adding those which he wrote afterwards at intervals until the year of his death, the total number of *Imaginary Conversations* left by Landor amounts to just short of a hundred and fifty.

Those written in the eight years now under review include, therefore, about two-thirds of the whole. We have seen with what ardour and facility, and with what a miscellaneous selection of speakers and of topics, they were produced. Their range extends over the greater part of life, literature, and history. Landor himself, and his editors after him, devised in the sequel various modes of grouping and classifying them; but none of these classifications are satisfactory. *Conversations of the Greeks and Romans* form, indeed, one distinct historical division, but not a division on which it is desirable to insist. It has often been said of Landor that he wrote of the Greeks more like a Greek, and of the Romans more like a Roman, than any other modern, and the saying in my judgment is true. But his treatment of other themes is not different in kind from his treatment of these, and he has not been better inspired by the romance and the example of antiquity, than by the charm of Italy, or the glory of England. The original title of the two first volumes, *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen*, by no means covered the whole of their contents; and the edi-

torial divisions afterwards established by Mr. Forster, viz., *Greeks and Romans*, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, *Literary Men*, *Famous Women*, and *Miscellaneous*, cross and overlap each other in many directions. To my mind the only vital and satisfactory division between one class and another of Landor's prose conversations is that between the dramatic and the non-dramatic; the words are inexact, and the distinction is far from being sharp or absolute; but what I mean is this, that some of the compositions in question are full of action, character, and passion, and those I call the dramatic group; in others there is little action, and character and passion are replaced by disquisition and reflection, and those I call by contrast the non-dramatic. In the former class, Landor is in each case taken up with the creative task of realizing a heroic or pathetic situation, and keeps himself entirely in the background. In the latter class his energetic personality is apt to impose itself upon his speakers, who are often little more than masks behind which he retires in order to utter his own thoughts and opinions with the greater convenience and variety.

The dramatic conversations are mostly brief, and range over almost all periods of time. Central examples of the class are, from Roman antiquity, the dialogues of Marcellus and Hannibal, and of Tiberius and Vipsania; from the history or historic legend of England, those of Leofric and Godiva, of John of Gaunt and Joanna of Kent, of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn, and of Lady Lisle and Lady Elizabeth Gaunt; from the history of France, those of Joan of Arc and Agnes Sorel, and of Bossuet and the Duchesse de Fontanges; from that of Italy, the interviews of Dante with Beatrice, and of Leonora di Este with Father Panigarola. In these and similar cases Landor

merely takes a motive suggested by history, being more apt to avoid than to make use of any actually recorded incident, and preferring to call up, not any scene which to our positive knowledge ever was, but only such a scene as might have been, enacted, the characters and circumstances being given. It is therefore from the imaginative and not from the literal point of view that his work is to be approached. His endeavour is to embody the spirit of historical epochs in scenes of which the actions and the emotions shall be at the same time new and just. In many instances his success is complete. The spirit, as I have already said, of Roman conquest stands typically fixed in a dialogue like that of Marius and Metellus; so does the spirit of Norman chivalry in one like that of Tancredi and Constantia; and of English honour in that of John of Gaunt and the Queen. In the actual dramatic conduct of the scenes, Landor in these short compositions shows a creative power and insight equal to that of the very greatest masters. Uniting the extreme of force to the extreme of tenderness, he pursues and seizes with convincing mastery the subtlest movements of impassioned feeling. Out of the nobility and tenderness of his own heart he imagines heights and delicacies of those qualities unmatched, as I cannot but think, by any English writer except Shakspeare. Pitching the emotions of his actors at an ideal height, his aim, we must farther remember, is to fix and embody them in an ideal cast of language; language of a perfection and a precision which no stress of feeling is allowed to impair or discompose. The emotion as thus embodied in words as it were of marble Landor leaves always as "naked" as possible, as much divested of accident and superfluity. Explanations and stage directions of all sorts the reader has to supply for himself, the author furnishing nothing of that nature

except what is to be inferred from the bare utterances of his speakers. At the same time we are aware that he has himself realized the action of every scene with perfect clearness. These high-strung dramatic dialogues used to cost Landor in the composition both throes and tears. As in the writing of *Count Julian* long ago, so now in that of *Tiberius and Vipsania,* he tells us how he watched and wept over his work by night, and how every feature and gesture of his personages stood visibly present before his mind's eye. But as in *Count Julian,* so now, he fails occasionally to take the reader with him. Want of instinctive sympathy with his reader is the weak point of Landor's lofty art, and in these dialogues he is so perfectly sure of his own way that he sometimes forgets to put into our hands the clue which we need in order to follow him. But usually nothing more is necessary than a little attention, a little deliberateness in reading—and work so full and rich is to be read attentively and deliberately if at all—in order to make all clear. The speeches as they succeed one another then become to us at the same time both monuments of the emotions of the actors, and landmarks indicating the crisis which their actions have reached; and we read between the lines how the heart-stricken Thetis has sunk through the embrace of Peleus; how the maidens in the house of Xanthus shrank one behind another in inquisitive awe at the beauty of Rhodope, the stranger slave from Phrygia; how Marius adventures and returns over blood and ashes within the walls of the beleaguered city of Numantia; how Zenobia is hurled by her despairing Rhadamistus into the eddies of the Araxes; how Godiva descends from her palfrey to kneel and pray when Leofric has sworn his cruel oath; how Dante for the last time rests his fevered head upon the

maiden bosom of Beatrice; how Anne Boleyn swoons at the unlooked-for entrance of her lord; or how the palace dog is heard lapping as it falls the blood of the murdered Czar.—Or sometimes the incidents are of another kind, and we realize with amusement how the venerable Bossuet bustles to pick up his ring lest the child-mistress of Louis XIV. should stoop for it; or how that monarch himself lets slip by inadvertence into his breeches the strip of silk which the same prelate and confessor has enjoined him to place next his skin by way of penance. For among the dialogues of this dramatic group some are comic, or at least satiric, branding the delinquencies of priests and kings in a vein of Aristophanic or Rabelaisian exaggeration. These however are seldom among Landor's best work, marble being not the most suitable material for caricature, nor weight and polish its most appropriate excellencies. In general it may be truly said of Landor that he rises or falls according to the nature of his subject, and is at his best only in the highest things. Especially is this true in his treatment of women. Both in the physical and the spiritual, Landor's feeling for the feminine is as strong as it is exquisite; there is no writer, Shakspeare alone once more excepted, who surpasses him in it. Hardly Perdita or Imogen themselves are made more beautiful to us by words than Landor's maiden image of Hope,—"her countenance was tinged with so delicate a colour that it appeared an effluence of an irradiated cloud passing over us in the heavens," or than his Greek Thelymnia in her crown of myrtle: "there was something in the tint of the tender sprays resembling that of the hair they encircled; the blossoms too were white as her forehead." Hardly Imogen again, hardly Cordelia, hardly Desdemona, are more nobly realized types of con-

stancy and sweetness, of womanly heroism and womanly resignation, than are Landor's Joan of Arc or his Anne Boleyn during the brief scenes in which they are brought before us. But there is one weak point in Landor's dealing with women which must not be overlooked. When he comes down from these heights, and deals with the every-day timidities of young love and simplicities of girlish feeling, he sometimes, it must be confessed, goes altogether astray, and strikes the note of false innocence and flirting "archness." His young women, including the Greek, are on these occasions apt to say "audacious!" "you must be a very bold man!" "put me down!" and generally to comport themselves in a manner giggly, missish, and disconcerting.

To give the reader a just idea of Landor's manner in this class of his *Conversations*, it would be desirable to set before him at least two examples, one to illustrate the extreme of his strength, the other of his delicacy, in dramatic imagination. Space failing for this, let us detach an example of an intermediate kind from a dialogue to which allusion has several times been made already, that of *Leofric and Godiva*, beginning at the point where the petitions of the tender-hearted bride begin to overbear her lord's obstinate resentment against his people.

Leofric. We must hold solemn festivals.

Godiva. We must indeed.

Leofric. Well then!

Godiva. Is the clamorousness that succeeds the death of God's dumb creatures, are crowded halls, are slaughtered cattle, festivals? Are maddenings songs and giddy dances, and hireling praises from party-coloured coats? Can the voice of a minstrel tell us better things of ourselves, than our own internal one might tell us? or can his breath make our breath softer in sleep? O my beloved! let everything be a joyance to us: it will, if we will. Sad is the day, and worse must follow,

when we hear the blackbird in the garden and do not throb with joy. But Leofric, the high festival is strewn by the servant of God upon the heart of man. It is gladness, it is thanksgiving, it is the orphan, the starveling prest to the bosom, and bidden as its first commandment to remember its benefactor. We will hold this festival; the guests are ready: we may keep it up for weeks and months and years together, and always be the happier and the richer for it. The beverage of this feast, O Leofric, is sweeter than bee or flower or vine can give us: it flows from heaven; and in heaven will it again be poured out abundantly to him, who pours it out here abundantly.

Leofric. Thou art wild.

Godiva. I have indeed lost myself; the words are not mine: I only feel and utter them. Some Power, some good, kind Power melts me (body and soul and voice) into tenderness and love. O my husband, we must obey it. Look upon me! look upon me! lift again your sweet eyes from the ground! I will not cease to supplicate; I dare not.

Leofric. We will think upon it.

Godiva. O never say that word! those who utter it are false men. What! think upon goodness when you can be good! Let not their infants cry for food! the mother of our blessed Lord will hear them; us never afterward.

Leofric. Here comes the bishop: we are now but one mile from the walls. Why dismountest thou? no bishop can expect it. Godiva, my honour and rank among men are humbled by this: Earl Godwin will hear of it: up! up! the bishop hath seen it: he urgeth his horse onward: dost thou not hear him now upon the solid turf behind thee?

Godiva. Never, no, never, will I rise, O Leofric, until you remit this most impious tax, this tax on hard labour, on hard life.

Leofric. Turn round: look how the fat nag canters, as to the tune of a sinner's psalm, slow and hard-breathing. . . . What reason or right can the people have to complain, while their bishop's steed is so sleek and well caparisoned? Inclination to change, desire to abolish old usages. . . . Rise, up for

shame! they shall smart for it, idlers. Sir bishop, I must blush for my young bride.

Godiva. My husband, my husband! will you pardon the city?

Leofric. O, sir bishop! I could not think you would have seen her in this plight. Will I pardon? yea, Godiva, by the holy rood, will I pardon the city, when thou ridest naked at noontide through the streets.

Godiva. O my dear, cruel Leofric, where is the heart you gave me? It was not so! Can mine have hardened it?

Bishop. Earl, thou abashest thy spouse; she turneth pale and weepeth. Lady Godiva, peace be with thee.

Godiva. Thanks, holy man! peace will be with me when peace is with your city. Did you hear my lord's hard word?

Bishop. I did, lady.

Godiva. Will you remember it, and pray against it?

Bishop. Wilt thou forget it?

Godiva. I am not offended.

Bishop. Angel of peace and purity!

Godiva. But treasure it up in your heart. Deem it an incense; good only when it is consumed and spent, ascending with prayer and sacrifice. And now what was it?

Bishop. Christ save us! that he will pardon the city when thou ridest naked through the streets at noon.

Godiva. Did he not swear an oath?

Bishop. He sware by the holy rood.

Godiva. My Redeemer! thou hast heard it! save the city!

Leofric. We are upon the beginning of the pavement: these are the suburbs: let us think of feasting: we may pray afterward: to-morrow we shall rest.

Godiva. No judgments then to-morrow, Leofric?

Leofric. None: we will carouse.

Godiva. The saints of heaven have given me strength and confidence: my prayers are heard: the heart of my beloved is now softened.

Leofric. Ay, ay.

Godiva. Say, dearest Leofric, is there indeed no other hope, no other mediation?

Leofric. I have sworn. Besides, thou hast made me redden and turn my face away from thee, and all these knaves have seen it. This adds to the city's crime.

Godiva. I have blushed, too, Leofric, and was not rash nor cruel.

Leofric. But thou, my sweetest, art given to blushing; there is no conquering it in thee. I wish thou hadst not alighted so hastily and roughly: it hath shaken down a sheaf of thy hair: take heed not to sit upon it, lest it anguish thee. Well done! it mingleth now sweetly with the cloth of gold upon the saddle, running here and there, as if it had life and faculties and business, and were working thereupon some newer and cunninger device. O my beauteous Eve! there is a paradise about thee! the world is refreshed as thou movest and breathest on it. . . . I cannot see or think of evil where thou art. I would throw my arms even here about thee. . . . . No signs for me! no shaking of sunbeams! no reproof or frown or wonderment. . . . . I *will* say it. . . now then for worse. . . . . I would close with my kisses thy half-open lips, ay, and those lovely and loving eyes, before the people.

Godiva. To-morrow you shall kiss me, and they shall bless you for it. I shall be very pale, for to-night I must fast and pray.

Leofric. I do not hear thee; the voices of the folks are so low under this archway.

Godiva (to herself). God help them! good kind souls! I hope they will not crowd about me so to-morrow. O Leofric! could my name be forgotten! and yours alone remembered. But perhaps my innocence may save me from reproach . . . . and how many as innocent are in fear and famine! No eye will open on me but fresh from tears. What a young mother for so large a family! Shall my youth harm me? Under God's hand it gives me courage. Ah, when will the morning come? ah, when will the noon be over?

The second class of Landor's dialogues, the dialogues of discussion and reflection, are both much more numerous, and individually for the most part much longer, than

those of which I have thus far spoken. They also range over almost the whole field of history, and include several of the satiric kind, in which modern statesmen are generally the speakers. The description non-dramatic must not be taken too strictly, inasmuch as Landor often introduces and concludes a purely discursive and reflective dialogue with passages of pleasant intercourse and play of feeling, and sometimes enlivens the whole course of the discussion with such accompaniments. Or again, he grasps and realizes in a way that may fairly be called dramatic, whether it coincides with our historical ideas or not, the character of this or that individual speaker. But at least as often either one of the speakers or both are mere mouthpieces for the utterance of Landor's own thoughts and sentiments. He expressly warns his readers, indeed, against taking for his own any of the opinions put into the mouths of his personages; but the reader familiar with Landor's other writings and with his correspondence will have no difficulty in recognizing where the living man expresses himself behind the historic mask. Thus we know that it is Landor himself who is contending for toleration and open-mindedness in matters of religious faith, alike in the person of Lucian and in that of Melanchthon; for simplicity and integrity of thought and speech in those of Diogenes and of Epictetus. It is Landor who transports himself in imagination into the gardens of Epicurus, and holds delightful converse with Leontion and Ternissa; it is Landor who through the mouths of Anacreon and of the priest of Ammon rebukes the ambition of Polycrates and of Alexander. Landor behind the mask of Andrew Marvel glorifies against the time-serving archbishop the great poet of the English republic, and Landor dictates the true policy of his country through the

lips of the Greek or Spanish revolutionary leaders. It is the greatest tribute to the range of his powers and of his knowledge that he could adapt his thoughts to so great a diversity of ages and characters without too obvious a forfeiture of verisimilitude in any given case.

Landor's whole treatment of Plato is very characteristic of his way of thinking and working. He would accept no secondhand verdict in matters either of literature or life; and when he had examined any matter for himself, was none the worse pleased if he found his judgment running counter to the received opinion. Although theoretically he disliked and despised paradox, he was certainly "well content," as Emerson puts it, "to impress his English whim upon the immutable past," and to refashion ancient glories in a mould of his own construction. At Florence he went, he tells us, every morning for a long while to the Magliabecchian Library, and read the whole works of Plato through. Considering what the works of Plato are, and that Landor was by no means a perfectly accomplished Greek scholar, it is evident that his reading must have been perfunctory. But it was enough to inspire him with a great distaste, and a considerable portion of contempt, for that illustrious author. Landor was never blind to genius, but in the genius of Plato he saw and noted little except the flaws and singularities. He has carefully collected, apart from their connexion, examples of everything that is practically unreasonable in Plato's views of civil government; of everything that is fantastic in his allegories, captious in his reasonings, and ambiguous or redundant in his diction. He has made Plato cut a figure both pretentious and ridiculous in his intercourse with Diogenes, who lectures him on style and on morals, reproves his want of simplicity and independence, discharges at him a

whole artillery of wise and beautiful sayings in Landor's own finest manner, and even knocks out of his hand his especial weapons of poetical eloquence, outdoing him with a passage of splendid rhetoric on the nothingness and restlessness of human power as compared with the power of the gentlest of the elements, the air. Neither is Landor content with this discomfiture of Plato at the hands of his contemporary philosopher of the tub; he returns to the charge where we should least have expected it, and in a dialogue of Lord Chatham with Lord Chesterfield makes the great statesman turn the conversation on ancient philosophy, and edify his visitor with an exposition of the faults and fallacies which he has found in Plato. This unexpectedness, which is yet not the same thing as paradox, this preference for, and habit of lighting on, the thing *indictum ore alio*, is an essential part of Landor's genius.

To return to the general character of these *Conversations*, their weakness lies in Landor's inaptitude alike for close or sustained reasoning, and for stirring or rapid narrative; his characters seldom attempt argument, and almost as often as they attempt story-telling, they fail. The true strength of the discursive *Conversations* resides in the extraordinary richness, the originality and meditative depth and insight of the reflexions scattered through them—reflexions generally clenched and illuminated by images, and adding the quality of beauty to the qualities of solid ingenuity or wisdom. Some of the dialogues are filled almost from beginning to end with such reflexions. In some they are few and far between. Sometimes they are set in a framework of graceful incident, and amidst beautiful magnanimities and urbanities of intercourse; sometimes they have to be sought out

through a maze of more or less tedious disquisitions, confused anecdotes, and unsuccessful witticisms. Occasionally Landor spoils an otherwise admirable dialogue of antiquity by intruding into it a sarcastic apologue against some object of his political aversion in the modern world. Occasionally he makes his personages discuss with much fulness and rotundity of speech questions of learning and of curiosity that can be interesting only to himself; in a word he does that which he was so keenly sensible of Wordsworth's mistake in allowing himself to do—he drones. It is a classical and from the point of view of style an exemplary form of droning, but it is droning still. To the lover of fine thoughts there is not one of these dialogues which it is not worth his while to read through and through for the sake of the jewels it contains. But there are not many which, like the dialogues of Diogenes and Plato, of the two Ciceros, of Marvel and Archbishop Parker, he can recommend to the ordinarily intelligent reader in the confidence that he will not be fatigued before the end. It should be said, however, that the appetite for Landor always grows with the reading. The mansions of his mind are so various, and the riches treasured up in them so vast, that if they contain some chill and musty corridors we may well be content to traverse these too with patience. When Landor is good he is so admirably and so originally good, so full of crushing and massive force on one page, and of a delicacy surpassing that of the tenderest poets on another, that to know him well repays tenfold whatever hours of weariness his weak places cost. He never emphasizes or separates his own good sayings, but delivers himself of his best and of his worst with the same composure and completeness.

During these eight years of sustained and on the whole

victorious literary effort, the outward life of Landor had not failed to exhibit the usual contrasts between his doctrine and his practice. The author of the maxim "neither to give nor to take offence is surely the best thing in life," had been taking and giving offence as superfluously as ever. We have already witnessed the bursting of two storms in the course of his relations with his publishers; others had gathered nearer home. Landor had found or invented cause of dudgeon against members both of the English embassy and of the native magistrature at Florence. He had, it is said, challenged a secretary of legation for whistling in the street when Mrs. Landor passed, and had written a formal complaint to the Foreign Office concerning the character of "the wretches they employed abroad." He had persuaded himself that he was a man marked out for petty persecution by the agents of authority both in Italy and England. He was on terms of permanent misunderstanding with the police. Some of the expressions and anecdotes concerning Florentine society which he had introduced into one of his first Conversations had been translated, and had further helped to plunge him in hot water. With his lofty standards of honour and veracity, of independence and decorum, he had indeed conceived a sovereign contempt for the character, if not of the Italian people in general, at any rate of the city population in the midst of which he lived. His arbitrary indignations and eccentricities made him seem to them on his part the most ideally mad of all mad Englishmen. His residence at the Medici palace was brought to an untimely end by a quarrel with his landlord, a marquis bearing the historic name of the house. Landor imagined that this marquis had unfairly seduced away his coachman, and wrote to complain accordingly. The next day the marquis came

strutting with his hat on into the room where Mrs. Landor was sitting with some visitors. "He had scarcely," writes one of these, "advanced three steps from the door, when Landor walked up to him quickly, and knocked his hat off, then took him by the arm and turned him out. You should have heard Landor's shout of laughter at his own anger, when it was all over; inextinguishable laughter, which none of us could resist." Incidents of this kind, however, were too frequent in Landor's life to affect him very deeply. His wrath usually exhaled itself either in a fit of laughter or an epigram—if anything so solid as a Landorian epigram can justly be called an exhalation. At worst a quarrel would sometimes give him a bilious attack, or aggravate the annual fit of quinsy to which he had by this time become subject.

Domestic and social consolations were not wanting to Landor in these days. His conjugal relations continued to be for some time endurable, if far from ideal; while in his children, the fourth and last of whom was born in 1825, he took a constantly increasing delight. He loved and cherished them with a passionate, almost an animal-intensity of affection. In their games *Babbo* was one of themselves, the most gleeful and the most riotous of play-mates. He could not bear to be parted from them, and went half beside himself with anxiety when during a visit to Naples he heard that some of them were down with a childish illness. In his letters to his sisters and his mother at home, he made those kindly hearts the partici-pators in his parental delights. This home correspondence of Landor's never flagged during his mother's life. He wrote to her about his doings and about the children, and she replied from Warwick or Ipsley with all the gossip of the county. Knowing his aversion for business, she did not

trouble him much with details of his property or accounts, but was full of plans for his future and that of his children. She hoped that when she was gone he would come home and settle down to the life of an English country gentleman, and that he would get as much enjoyment out of Ipsley as she had herself got all her life. She hoped, and it was Landor's error and misfortune in this to have neglected her advice, that he would send his sons home to England to be educated. His bent towards literature Landor had not indeed, like many men of genius, derived from his mother. She looked upon his exertions in this kind with a vague respect not unmingled with alarm. In thanking him for a copy of his Latin poetry which he had sent her, she had said it was pronounced by the learned to be very delightful, "but one cannot read it, to understand it, oneself." And now, when she heard of the *Imaginary Conversations*, she only hoped he was not injuring his health by too much work. "For God's sake do not hurt your eyes, nor rack your brains too much, to amuse the world by writing. But take care of your health, which will be of greater use to your family."

To his other occupations Landor began to add soon after his arrival at Florence that of a picture collector. He formed his own taste and his own opinions in connoisseurship as in other things, and acted on them with his usual confidence and precipitancy. He anticipated the modern predilection for the pre-Raphaelite masters, whose pictures were then in no demand. Of the works of these and other schools an almost incredible number, some good, but according to skilled evidence the greater part bad or indifferent, passed through Landor's hands in the course of the next fifteen years. He liked the rooms in which he lived to be denuded of nearly all furniture

except pictures, with which their walls were covered from floor to ceiling. He was a great giver, and fond, especially in later years, of sending away a guest the richer for a token in the shape of a picture from his walls. Always disinclined to general society, and particularly to official society, he found in Florence as much companionship as he desired of the sort that suited him best. Among the residents, his chief associates were Mr. Seymour Kirkup, then and for half a century afterwards a central figure of the English colony in the city; Charles Armitage Brown, the friend and comrade of Keats; and a Mr. Leckie, whose company is said to have been more joyous than decorous, and more welcome to Landor than to his wife. Francis Hare, too, was often in Florence, and when he and Landor were together, the encounter of wits ran high. Both were men of amazing knowledge and amazing memory; their self-confidence was about equal. Landor was in intercourse of this kind the more urbane and forbearing of the two, Hare the more overpoweringly brilliant and impetuous. They disputed often, but never quarrelled; and remained faithful friends to the last. Landor's letters to Hare during his absence are as full as those to Southey of the varied matter of his thoughts, set forth in his energetic, disconnected way, and often containing germs which we find developed in the *Conversations* of the time.

After the appearance of the first two volumes of his *Conversations* Landor was habitually sought out, as a man of acknowledged genius and fame, by the more distinguished of the English who came to Florence. He seldom accepted dinners or other invitations, but received in his own house those visitors who brought him introductions. One day Hogg, the friend of Shelley, was announced while Hare was sitting in the room. Landor said that he felt himself

like La Fontaine with all the better company of the beasts about him. Hogg was delighted with his interview, and wrote afterwards that if he wished to procure any one for whom he cared a real benefit, it would be the friendship of Walter Savage Landor. In 1825 came Leigh Hunt. In his short-lived paper, the *Liberal*, Byron's *Vision of Judgment* with its preface had been published three years before, but he had lately made his *amende*, as he tells us, to Landor, with whom he was always thenceforward on good terms.

Soon afterwards came Hazlitt; who brought no introduction, but said he would beard the lion in his den, "and walked up to his house," says Mr. Kirkup, "one winter's morning in nankeen shorts and white stockings, was made much of by the royal animal, and often returned at night, for Landor was much out in the day, in all weathers." Of their conversations one is recorded in which Hazlitt expounded to his breathless and, as it seemed, envious host, the simple process by which, under the Scotch law, he had been enabled to get himself divorced by consent from his wife; and another in which, on Landor saying that he had never seen Wordsworth, Hazlitt asked, "But you have seen a horse, I suppose?" and being answered yes, continued, "Well, sir, if you have seen a horse, I mean his head, sir, you may say you have seen Wordsworth, sir." But the visitors with whom Landor formed at this time the closest and most permanent friendship were not Hunt or Hazlitt, but the Irish nobleman and his gifted wife who, with the French Apollo who had lately attached himself to their household, was making at this time his memorable Italian tour. Lord Blessington had been known long ago to Landor as Lord Mountjoy, and when he came to Florence made haste to renew their acquaintance. In his

wife, the fascinating daughter of a ruffianly Irish squireen, married at fourteen to a ruffianly English officer, and again, after some years of widowhood, to this amiable, cultivated, sumptuous, gouty, reformed *roué* of an Irish peer—in Lady Blessington, Landor found the most appreciative and most constant of friends. Of all the celebrities of her acquaintance, and that means of all who were living in her day, Landor was the one for whom she conceived from the first, and retained until her death, the warmest attachment and respect. She thought him the most genuinely polite man in Europe, and it was a point upon which she had a right to speak. With Lord Blessington and Count D'Orsay Landor became almost as fast friends as with my Lady, and he spent most of the evenings of one whole summer, and two a week of the next, in the enjoyment of their society in the beautiful Casa Pelosi, the villa which they occupied on the Lung' Arno. In 1827 the Blessingtons persuaded him to join them in a yachting trip to Naples; but as on a former trip with Hare to Rome, so again now Landor's pleasure was marred by his feverish anxiety on account of his children. It was on the former of these expeditions that Landor had received the first childish letter from his son Arnold, and had ended his own answer with the words, —

I shall never be quite happy until I see you again and put my cheek upon your head.. Tell my sweet Julia, that if I see twenty little girls I will not romp with any of them before I romp with her, and kiss your two dear brothers for me. You must always love them as much as I love you, and you must teach them how to be good boys, which I cannot do so well as you can. God preserve and bless you, my own Arnold. My heart beats as if it would fly to you, my own fierce creature. We shall very soon meet; love your BABBO.

In 1827 there came to the Villa Castiglione another

visitor, with whom Landor formed an immediate friendship. This was Mr. Ablett of Llandbedr, a Welsh gentleman of fortune and literary tastes, who conceived an enthusiasm for Landor's genius and his person, commissioned a bust of him by Gibson, and a year afterwards, Landor being then looking out for a new place of abode, and desiring one in the country near Florence, came forward to furnish him the means of securing for himself a home that seemed the ideal of his dreams. This was the Villa Gherardesca, a fine and ancient house, surrounded with a considerable extent of farm and garden, on a height a little below Fiesole, to the right hand of the road ascending to that city from Florence. By the beauty of its prospect and the charm of its associations, this site was for Landor the choicest that could be found. His favourite of all Italian authors, his favourite, indeed, of all in the world after Shakspeare, Milton, and the ancients, was Boccaccio. The Valley of Ladies, described in the most enchanting passage of the *Decameron*, lies within the grounds of the Villa Gherardesca, and the twin streams of Affrico and Mensola, celebrated in the *Ninfale*, run through them. The price of this enviable property so far exceeded any means immediately at Landor's disposal, that he had never even thought of becoming its purchaser. But Mr. Ablett insisted on advancing the required amount. He would take no interest, and Landor was after some years able to repay the capital of the loan out of the yearly savings on his income. It was in 1829 that he removed with his family into their new home.

CHAPTER VI.

FIESOLE AND ENGLAND—THE EXAMINATION OF SHAKSPEARE —PERICLES AND ASPASIA—THE PENTAMERON.

(1829—1837.)

THE years spent by Landor in his villa at Fiesole seem on the whole to have been the happiest in his life. His children were not yet of the age when the joy which children give either ceases or is transformed; they were still his rapturously loved playmates; and the farm and gardens of the villa made the rarest of playgrounds. Father and children alike found endless occupation and pastime in delving, planting, clearing, gardening, and the keeping of pets. For the first time since he went abroad Landor's love of animals had now full play. Besides the great house-dog Parigi, we hear of the cat Cincirillo, and the difficulty of keeping him from the birds; of a tame marten, for whom when he died his master composed a feeling epitaph; a tame leveret, and all manner of other pets. The place was as beautiful and fertile as it was rich in associations. From amid the clouds of olive and spires of cypress within his gates, Landor loved to look down to right and left along the sweep of Valdarno, or away towards the distant woods of Vallombrosa, or the misty ridges above Arezzo; he loved at sunset to watch

all the hills of Tuscany turning to amethyst beneath those skies of pearl.

> Let me sit down and muse by thee
> Awhile, aerial Fiesole,

he wrote; and even while he found his new home the best, his thoughts went back with affection to that which he had left in Wales.

> Llanthony! an ungenial clime,
> And the broad wing of restless Time,
> Have rudely swept thy mossy walls
> And rockt thy abbots in their palls.
> I loved thee by thy streams of yore,
> By distant streams I love thee more.

To his friend Francis Hare, who had married not long before, Landor writes:—

. . . . Did I tell you I have bought a place in the country, near Fiesole? I shall say no more about it to you, but try whether Mrs. H. will not bring you to see it in the spring.

DEAR MRS. HARE,—Do then conduct your slave, of whom I dare say you are prouder than ever Zenobia would have been if she had taken Aurelian, back again to Florence.—No, not to Florence, but to Fiesole. Be it known, I am master of the very place to which the greatest genius of Italy, or the Continent, conducted those ladies who told such pleasant tales in the warm weather, and the very scene of his Ninfale. Poor Affrico, for some misconduct, has been confined within stone walls. There no longer is lake or river, but a little canal. The place, however, is very delightful, and I have grapes, figs, and a nightingale—all at your service, but you cannot be treated with all on the same day.

To his sisters Landor writes with more detail and more enthusiasm. He tells the whole story of Mr. Ablett's unexpected kindness. "It is true his fortune is very large; but if others equal him in fortune, no human being

ever equalled him in generosity." Landor goes on to describe the house, the size and arrangement of the rooms, the views, the two gardens, one with a fountain, the conservatories for lemons and oranges. He tells too of the cypresses, vines, roses, arbutuses, bays, and French fruit-trees which he is planting; of the wholesomeness of the soil and climate. "I have the best water, the best air, and the best oil in the world. My country now is Italy, where I have a residence for life, and literally may sit under my own vine and my own fig-tree. I have some thousands of the one and some scores of the other, with myrtles, pomegranates, gagias, and mimosas in great quantity. I intend to make a garden not very unlike yours at Warwick; but alas! time is wanting. I may live another ten years, but do not expect it. In a few days, whenever the weather will allow it, I have four mimosas ready to place round my tomb, and a friend who is coming to plant them." The friend here in question is no other than Landor's old love Ianthè, who to his delight had reappeared about this time in Florence. Her first husband had died within a year of Landor's own ill-starred marriage. She had now lately buried her second, and was the object of the addresses at the same time of a French duke and an English earl; neither of which were ultimately accepted. The course of her own and Landor's lives brought them across one another's path once and again before her death. Those who saw them in company have described the tender and assiduous homage which marked his bearing to her above all other women, and his allusions to her in prose and verse show that she never ceased to be the ideal of his inward thoughts.

The letter just quoted was written on New Year's Day, 1830. A few weeks before, Landor had lost his mother.

That kind, just, and in her own way most shrewd and capable old lady, had been failing since the spring of 1829, and had died in October at the close of her eighty-fifth year. "My mother's grêat kindness to me," writes Landor "throughout the whole course of her life made me perpetually think of her with the tenderest love. I am not sorry that she left me some token of her regard; but she gave me too many in her lifetime for me to think of taking any now." So Landor asks his sisters to keep the little legacies which his mother had left him. What is more, he insists on their continuing to have the enjoyment of Ipsley, and declines to allow the place to be let or its contents to be sold for his own benefit. For the rest, the tenour of Landor's life was little changed. His thoughts were as much his companions as ever. He was to be met at all seasons rambling alone, in old clothes and battered straw hat, upon the heights round Fiesole, and audibly, like Wordsworth "booing" about the hills of Cumberland, repeating to himself the masterpieces that he loved, or trying and balancing the clauses and periods of his own stately prose. He was constantly adding to and filling out his *Imaginary Conversations*. One or two pieces which he had first conceived in this form grew during those Fiesolan days, as we shall see by-and-by, to the proportions of independent books. But the first book which Landor published after he came to Fiesole was one not of prose conversations, but of poetry. He had been long urged by Francis Hare to bring out a revised selection from his early poems, which at present only existed in volumes so rare that it was almost impossible any longer to procure them. After some years of hesitation the project was at last carried out, and the result appeared in 1831, in the shape of a volume dedicated to Hare himself, and

containing reprints of *Gebir*, of *Count Julian*, of some pieces chosen from the *Simonidea* and other earlier collections, besides a few things which were now printed for the first time. From *Gebir*, as now and afterwards republished, Landor cut out all passages implying praise of Buonaparte or of revolutionary France. Following *Count Julian*, he printed three dramatic fragments of which he had sent the manuscript to Southey from Pisa ten years before; two on the Spanish subject of Ines de Castro and Don Pedro; one, under the title *Ippolito di Este*, containing some recovered or rewritten fragments of the tragedy burnt long ago at Llanthony. Then followed the Icelandic tale of *Gunlang* from the collection of 1805. Between the love-pieces and the elegies selected from the *Simonidea* came a number of miscellaneous poems, some old and some new. Landor showed that his wrath against his Welsh persecutors had not even yet subsided by printing a long and laboured set of Hudibrastics written at the time against the adverse counsel Taunton. Much better to read, perhaps indeed the best of all Landor's short poems in the quality of deliberate, delicate, meditative description, is the *Fœsulan Idyl*, from which we have already quoted the admirable lines relating to the love of flowers.

All naturally was not idyllic, nor all peaceable, in Landor's new life. Having been robbed of some plate at the time when he was taking possession of his villa, he applied to the police, assuring them at the same time of his profound conviction of their corruptness and incompetence. Thereupon, apparently to his surprise, their feelings rose, and the quarrel very soon reached such a pitch that Landor was ordered to leave Tuscany, and did actually retreat as far as Lucca. Hence he wrote a fine courteous letter to the

Grand Duke in person, who took the whole matter pleasantly; and Lord Normanby, Sir Robert Lawley, and other friends interceding, the order of expulsion was tacitly regarded as a dead letter, and Landor came back in triumph. Very soon afterwards he was deep in a quarrel with a French neighbour of his own at Fiesole, a M. Antoir, living on a property of which the tenant had a customary right to the surplus water from the fountain of the Villa Gherardesca. The watering of Landor's flowers and shrubberies, and the English prodigality of the family in the matter of bathing, and the washing of stables, kennels, and cages, reduced this surplus to practically nothing. Hence a grievance, of course passionately resented. A duel between the disputants having been averted by the wisdom of Mr. Kirkup, whom Landor had chosen to be his second, there ensued a litigation which lasted for years; the case being tried and retried in all the courts of Tuscany.[1]

But these combative and explosive aspects of Landor's nature were much more rarely revealed in ordinary social intercourse than of old. The impression which he made during these years upon his favoured guests and visitors was one of noble geniality as well as of imposing force. A new, close, and joyous friendship formed by him in these days, and never dropped afterwards, was with Mr. Kenyon, the friend also of the Hares and of many of the most distinguished men of the next succeeding generation. He had during a part of his life at Fiesole a pleasant neighbour in the novelist G. P. R. James, to whom he afterwards made allusion as "my

[1] The pleas brought forward on Landor's side, before the court of final appeal, constitute a stout quarto pamphlet, in a hundred and twelve numbered paragraphs, dated 1841.

hearty Tory friend, Mr. James, whose *Mary of Burgundy* Scott himself (were he envious) might have envied." That zealous and open-minded cultivator of men of genius, Crabbe Robinson, already familiar with Southey and Wordsworth, came to Florence in the summer of 1830, and presented himself immediately at the Villa Gherardesca. "To Landor's society," writes Robinson, "I owed much of my highest enjoyment during my stay at Florence. He was a man of florid complexion, with large, full eyes, altogether a 'leonine' man, and with a fierceness of tone well suited to his name; his decisions being confident, and on all subjects, whether of taste or life, unqualified; each standing for itself, not caring whether it was in harmony with what had gone before or would follow from the same oracular lips. He was conscious of his own infirmity of temper, and told me he saw few persons, because he could not bear contradiction. Certainly, I frequently did contradict him; yet his attentions to me, both this and the following year, were unwearied." He tells elsewhere how Landor used to invite him to his villa constantly of evenings, and send him back always at night under escort of the dog Parigi, who understood his duty perfectly, and would attend the visitor as far as the city gates, and duly return by himself to the villa. Robinson's account is farther valuable as making us realize the mingled respect, amusement, and astonishment, with which Landor was regarded by his Italian neighbours and workpeople. "*Tutti gl'Inglesi sono pazzi, ma questo poi!*"—such, according to another witness, was the sentence in which their impressions were summed up. His passionate dealings with his fellow-creatures and his tenderness for the inanimate things of nature were in like manner typified in the local legend which represented him

as having once thrown his cook out of window, and instantly afterwards thrust out his head with the exclamation, "Good God, I forgot the violets."

In the early summer of 1832, at the urgent request of Mr. Ablett and of other friends, Landor left Fiesole on a visit to England. It was the first time he had been in his native country for eighteen years. His stay seems to have given almost unmixed pleasure both to himself and to those with whom he was brought in contact. He found his friend Madame de Molandé at Brighton, "in the midst of music, dancing, and fashionable people turned radicals. This amused me highly." The excitement concerning the passing of the reform bill was at that moment at its height: "The people are half mad about the king and the Tories." On a flying passage through London Landor was hospitably entertained by the friendly Robinson, who took him to see Flaxman one day, Charles Lamb another, and Coleridge a third. In his praise of Flaxman, the one living Englishman who shared, although not his scholarship, his natural affinity with the genius of Greece, Landor seemed to his companion wildly enthusiastic. With Lamb, whose life was then drawing to its close, and with his sister, Landor was no less delighted. Not so with Coleridge, although that philosopher put on a new suit of clothes in his honour, and made him as many pretty speeches as if he had been a young girl; but his talk was all about himself, and he displeased Landor by taking no notice of an enthusiastic mention of Southey. He next went to make at last the personal acquaintance of Julius Hare at Cambridge. It must have been at this time that Hare persuaded Landor to become a contributor to the *Philological Museum*, a periodical lately founded by himself and some other

Cambridge scholars. In it Landor published in this year a selection of pieces in Latin verse, including that charming address to his eldest son, of which mention has already been made above (p. 10). Next year followed in the same journal one of the stateliest and most diversified of Landor's classical dialogues, in which Scipio is found conversing with Panætius and Polybius beside the ruins of Carthage. The strength of Rome and the culture of Greece are celebrated with equal eloquence, and a tale, such as Landor loved, of perilously delightful converse between an elderly philosopher and a beautiful girl, is told in his peculiar vein of clear and captivating Greek grace, of ever appropriate but never foreseen or familiar imagery. Landor never long remembered any of his own writings after he had finished them, and it is to be regretted that he has weakened the originality of this admirable conversation by unconsciously introducing into it echoes and repetitions both from that of Epicurus and that of the two Ciceros.

From Cambridge Landor went to see his sisters at Warwick, and thence to stay with his benefactor Ablett, at his beautiful home of Llanbedr. The two friends went on together to pay flying visits to Southey and Wordsworth at the lakes. Upon Southey the renewal of personal converse with Landor left an impression altogether delightful, but in the intercourse of Landor with Wordsworth the seeds seem already to have been sown of that change of feeling on Landor's part which we shall have to notice by-and-by. For the present, however, their correspondence with and language concerning one another continued to be as cordial as ever. Towards the end of September Landor was back again in London. Immediately afterwards he set out on his way home, accompanied

by Julius Hare and another companion from Cambridge. This was Mr. Worsley, the present master of Downing. The three travelled by Belgium and the field of Waterloo, "an ugly table for an ugly game," as Landor calls it, and then up the Rhine. At Bonn Landor met W. Schlegel, and the aged poet and patriot Arndt. Of Schlegel he writes to Crabbe Robinson, "He resembles a little pot-bellied pony tricked out with stars, buckles, and ribbons, looking askance, from his ring and halter in the market, for an apple from one, a morsel of bread from another, a fig of ginger from a third, and a pat from everybody." His interview with the honest Arndt the next day had, however, "settled the bile this coxcomb of the bazaar had excited." In one of the very last pieces of verse Landor ever wrote I find him recalling with pleasure how he and Arndt had talked together in Latin thirty years before in the poet's orchard; how they had chanced to hear a song of Arndt's own sung by the people in the town below; and how nimbly the old poet had run and picked up an apple to give his guest, who had kept the pips and planted them in his garden at Fiesole. At Innsbrück Landor busied himself with seeking for memorials of the Tyrolese patriot Hofer, who had always been one of his favourite heroes. Travelling by the Tyrol to Venice, he sent home from that city for publication an account of what he had learnt, together with incidental observations on Waterloo and Napoleon, on liberty and Venice, which is one of his most striking pieces of high plain prose, at once impassioned and austere. By the beginning of 1833 Landor was back again among his children, his pet animals, and his pictures at Fiesole. He composed in memory of his visit to England three several odes; one to Ablett, in

which he coupled Southey and Wordsworth together in the lines,—

> Live Derwent's guest ! and thou by Grasmere springs !
> Serene creators of immortal things,[1]—

and the other two addressed respectively to Southey and Wordsworth themselves. These odes contain as high-pitched lyrical writing as Landor ever attempted. Each of them has its fine lines and its felicities, but none of them is felicitous or excellent all through. Landor is in this kind of writing singularly unequal, starting often with a fine thought and a noble musical movement, and flagging and halting within a few lines. The ode to Wordsworth begins with a well-turned confession of Landor's own comparative amateurship in the art of poetry; its central portion is somewhat obscure; afterwards it falls into the lighter critical or colloquial vein of verse in which Landor was generally happy, and ends with one of the neatest and at the same time noblest of compliments.

> We both have run o'er half the space
> Listed for mortals' earthly race;

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[1] The original version of this *Ode to Ablett* was published in Leigh Hunt's *London Journal*, December 3, 1834. The lines quoted in the text were preceded by others alluding to the death of Coleridge,

> " Coleridge hath loost his shoe, or bathes in bliss
> Among the spirits that have power like his.

In a revised version sent a week or two later to Southey, these lines are changed to

> " Coleridge hath heard the call, and bathes in bliss
> Among the spirits that have power like his."

Several alterations were made afterwards, and as the ode was next printed in 1837, the allusion to Coleridge had disappeared altogether.

We both have crost life's fervid line,
And other stars before us shine:
May they be bright and prosperous
As those that have been stars for us!
Our course by Milton's light was sped,
And Shakspeare shining overhead:
Chatting on deck was Dryden too,
The Bacon of the rhyming crew;
None ever crost our mystic sea
More richly stored with thought than he;
Tho' never tender nor sublime,
He wrestles with and conquers Time.
To learn my lore on Chaucer's knee
I left much prouder company;
Thee gentle Spenser fondly led,
But me he mostly sent to bed.

I wish them every joy above
That highly blessed spirits prove,
Save one: and that too shall be theirs,
But after many rolling years,
When 'mid their light thy light appears.

A far more faultless and more distinguished example of Landor's verse, and one not less characteristic than those last quoted of his warm and generous appreciation of the works and characters of his brother writers, is the elegiac address to Mary Lamb on the death of her brother, which he wrote immediately upon hearing the news of that death in 1834.

Comfort thee, O thou mourner, yet awhile!
Again shall Elia's smile
Refresh thy heart, where heart can ache no more.
What is it we deplore?

He leaves behind him, freed from griefs and years,
Far worthier things than tears.
The love of friends without a single foe:
Unequalled lot below!

His gentle soul, his genius, these are thine;
For these dost thou repine?
He may have left the lowly walks of men;
Left them he has; what then?

Are not his footsteps followed by the eyes
Of all the good and wise?
Tho' the warm day is over, yet they seek
Upon the lofty peak

Of his pure mind the roseate light that glows
O'er death's perennial snows.
Behold him! from the region of the blest
He speaks: he bids thee rest.

Many months before this, he had been much affected in thinking over the deaths and misfortunes of distinguished men which had been happening round about him in quick succession. "What a dismal gap," he writes to Robinson, "has been made within a little time in the forest of intellect, among the plants of highest growth!" Then, after enumerating the deaths of Byron, Scott, Goethe, and Coleridge, he alludes to Southey's misfortune in his wife's decay of mind, and ends, "It appears as if the world were cracking all about me, and leaving me no object on which to fix my eyes."

Nevertheless new friends of a younger generation were drawing one after another to Landor's side. In the year after his visit to England there came from Cambridge the scholar and poet to whom the lovers of Landor are indebted for the most living and skilful sketch which they possess of his career as a whole. I mean Lord Houghton, then Mr. Monckton Milnes and a recent pupil of Julius Hare; from whom he brought to Landor a letter of introduction. Being laid up with Florentine fever, Mr. Milnes was taken by Landor to Fiesole to recruit, and passed several weeks in his villa. He has written of

Landor's affectionate reception, of his complimentary old-world manners, and of his elegant though simple hospitality; of his conversation, so affluent, animated, and coloured, so rich in knowledge and illustration, so gay and yet so weighty, that it equalled, if not surpassed, all that has been related of the table-talk of men eminent for social speech; and last, not least, of his laughter, "so pantomimic, yet so genial, rising out of a momentary silence into peals so cumulative and sonorous, that all contradiction and possible affront was merged for ever."

Yet another pilgrim of these days was Emerson. Landor was one of the five distinguished men for the sake of seeing whom he had made his first pilgrimage to Europe. Through a common friend, the sculptor Greenough, Emerson received an invitation to dine at the Villa Gherardesca, and in his *English Traits*, published many years afterwards, had much to say concerning his host. "I found him noble and courteous, living in a cloud of pictures at his Villa Gherardesca, a fine house commanding a beautiful landscape. I had inferred from his books, or magnified from some anecdotes, an impression of Achillean wrath—an untameable petulance. I do not know whether the imputation were just or not, but certainly on this May day his courtesy veiled that haughty mind, and he was the most patient and gentle of hosts." Then follows a report of conversations held and opinions expressed at the villa, to some part of which, as we shall see, Landor felt called upon to take exception when it appeared. Another American guest made not less welcome at the time, though he afterwards gave Landor occasion to repent his hospitality, was that most assiduous of flatterers and least delicate of gossips, N. P. Willis.

With him Landor discussed the project of an American edition of the *Imaginary Conversations*, and the discussion reached so practical a point that Landor actually entrusted to him his own copy of the five volumes already published, interleaved and full of corrections and additions, as well as his manuscript materials for a sixth. These Mr. Willis forthwith consigned to America, and having himself proceeded to England, lingered on in obsequious enjoyment of the great company among whom he found himself invited, and ceased to trouble himself any further about the business; nor was it until after much delay and annoyance that his neglected charge could be recovered from over seas. He had been more loyal in delivering to the hands to which it was addressed another volume in manuscript confided to him by Landor, that of the *Citation and Examination of William Shakspeare*. Of this, Lady Blessington undertook at Landor's request to superintend the publication, and it appeared anonymously in the course of the year 1834.

The *Examination of Shakspeare* is the first of that trilogy of books, as it has been sometimes called, the composition of which occupied the chief part of Landor's strength during his life at Fiesole. Some years before, he had written to Southey that he was trembling at his own audacity in venturing to bring Shakspeare upon the scene. At that time he merely meditated a dialogue of the ordinary compass, but the dialogue had grown into a volume. What attracted Landor especially towards the episode of Shakspeare's trial at Charlecote for deer-stealing was his own familiarity with the scenery and associations of the place. In an earlier dialogue of Chaucer, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, he had represented Chaucer as telling a story (and an uncommonly dreary story too) concerning

an imaginary ancestor of Sir Thomas Lucy. He now introduced that worthy magistrate himself, sitting in judgment in the hall of his house upon the youthful culprit from the neighbouring town. The account of the examination is supposed to be written by the magistrate's clerk, one Ephraim Barnett, a kindly soul, who allows his own compassion for the prisoner to appear plainly enough in the course of his narrative. The accusers are two of Sir Thomas's keepers, and the accused finds a malicious enemy in the person of the family chaplain, Master Silas Gough, who is conceived as having views of his own in reference to Anne Hathaway. The knight himself is made to show gleams of sense and kindness through his grotesque family and personal vanity. He has pretensions, moreover, to the character of an oracle on matters poetical. After many courteous rejoinders and covert banterings addressed by the prisoner to the knight, and many discomfitures of Master Silas, with much discussion and quotation of poetry, and an energetic working out of the intrinsic irony of the situation, the scene is brought to a close by the sudden escape of the prisoner, who darts out of the hall before any one can lay hands upon him, and in a trice is seen galloping past reach of pursuit upon his father's sorrel mare.

This is the longest and most sustained attempt ever made by Landor at witty or humorous writing. One of the greatest of humourists, Charles Lamb, is reported to have said of the book, which appeared a few weeks before his death, that only two men could have written it, namely the man who did write it, or he on whom it was written. This friendly formula was probably uttered with little meaning; but by Mr. Forster it has been taken in all seriousness. One of the earliest literary efforts of that zealous biographer himself was an enthusiastic review of the

Examination of Shakspeare when it appeared; and in writing Landor's life five-and-thirty years later he showed himself as enthusiastic as ever. Mrs. Browning has expressed a similar opinion, but I think it is one few students are likely to share. Landor's natural style is almost too weighty; his imitation of the seventeenth-century diction in this scene renders it even cumbrous. The imitative character of the prose is moreover quite out of keeping with the purely Landorian style of the verses with which the dialogue is interspersed. "Is there a man wise enough," wrote Landor once, "to know whether he himself is witty or not, to the extent he aims at? I doubt whether any question needs more self-examination. It is only the fool's heart that is at rest upon it." That Landor's own heart was not fully at rest on the question he shows by saying of the *Examination* when he sent it off, "It is full of fun, I know not whether of wit." It is evident that Landor's ample, exaggerative, broadly ironical vein of fun needed in order to commend it to others the help of his own genial presence and exulting, irresistible laugh. As conveyed by his strong-backed, stately-paced written sentences, its effect is to oppress rather than to exhilarate; such at least is the feeling of the present writer. Witty, in a towering, substantial, solidly ingenious way, Landor unquestionably is; but tellingly or adroitly so he is not; the trick of lightness, grotesqueness, of airy or grim banter, of rapidity and flash, is not within the compass of his powers.

Cumbrous as may be its pace, loaded its wit, the *Examination* is nevertheless rich in original thought and invention, and in wise and tender sayings; and some of the verses scattered through it, particularly the piece called the *Maid's Lament*, are excellent. But on the

whole it seems to me the nearest approach to an elaborate failure made by Landor in this form of writing. The personage of Shakspeare himself is certainly less successful than that of Sir Thomas Lucy. A single brief quotation may serve to show how energetically the author contrives to push his own vein of irony, and at the same time of poetry, into the utterances of the didactic knight. Waiving a promised lecture to the prisoner on the meaning of the words "natural cause," Sir Thomas Lucy goes on :—

Thy mind being unprepared for higher cogitations, and the groundwork and religious duty not being well rammer-beaten and flinted, I do pass over this supererogatory point, and inform thee rather, that bucks and swans and herons have something in their very names announcing them of knightly appurtenance. And (God forfend that evil do ensue therefrom!) that a goose on the common, or a game-cock on the loft of cottager or villager, may be seized, bagged, and abducted, with far less offence to the laws. In a buck there is something so gainly and so grand, he treadeth the earth with such ease and such agility, he abstaineth from all other animals with such punctilious avoidance, one would imagine God created him when He created knighthood. In the swan there is such purity, such coldness is there in the element he inhabiteth, such solitude of station, that verily he doth remind me of the Virgin Queen herself. Of the heron I have less to say, not having him about me; but I never heard his lordly croak without the conceit that it resembled a chancellor's or a primate's.

Following the *Examination of Shakspeare* in the same volume, and in a far happier vein, was a conversation, also feigned to have been preserved by the same scribe Ephraim Barnett, between Essex and Spenser after the burning of the poet's house and of his children in Ireland. This is indeed one of the noblest of all Landor's dialogues of passion. Caring little for Spenser's poetry, he had always been interested in his *View of the State of*

Affairs in Ireland; and Ireland in the wild days of the tithe rebellion, which was at its height when Landor wrote, was in the foreground of all men's thoughts. The beginning of the dialogue is political; Essex, who has just been charged with the settlement of the kingdom, questions Spenser without at first noticing his anguish and perturbation. Then follows the famous passage in which the revelation of the poet's misfortunes is at length forced from him. The noble courtesy of Essex, and the tenderness and imaginative beauty of the attempts made by him to console his friend before he knows the full nature of the misfortune, are set in his finest contrast with the crushed despair of Spenser, his shrinking from the intolerable memories within him, and the spasm almost of madness with which those memories at last burst from his lips, yet without ever tearing or forcing the strong fabric of the language in which they are conveyed. This is the dialogue to which perhaps first of all the reader should turn who wishes to form an idea of Landor's peculiar dramatic power and dramatic method.

The second book planned, and in great part written, by Landor at Fiesole was on a Greek theme; *Pericles and Aspasia;* and filled two volumes. It is characteristic of the author that he chose for the treatment of this subject a form which no one else would have thought of, namely the epistolary. He originally intended to introduce conversations as well, but in the end decided not to do so, and the book as it stands consists entirely of imaginary letters from Pericles to Aspasia, from Aspasia to Pericles, and from a few minor personages to each of them. The chief of these subordinate correspondents is Cleone, a friend and former companion of Aspasia at Miletus. Cleone is in love with a youth Xeniades, who himself hopelessly loves

Aspasia, and following her to Athens, dies there. Famous personages of Greek history, as Anaxagoras and Alcibiades, take part also in the correspondence. It is made to begin with the arrival of Aspasia in Athens, and her first meeting with Pericles, which is represented as taking place at a performance of the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus, and it ends with the death of Pericles during the plague of Athens and the occupation of the Athenian territory by the Spartans. Landor, as he used to say, loved walking upon the heights; he loved to think himself into fellow-citizenship with the greatest figures of the greatest ages of history; and he created for himself in *Pericles and Aspasia* an opportunity for pouring out all that he had imagined or reflected concerning the golden age of Greece. His sense of the glories of that age can best be realized by reading the language which he himself puts into the mouth of Pericles. Conscious of his approaching end, Pericles writes a farewell letter to Aspasia, whom he has sent into the country out of reach of contagion.

It is right and orderly (he begins) that he who has partaken so largely in the prosperity of the Athenians, should close the procession of their calamities. The fever that has depopulated our city, returned upon me last night, and Hippocrates and Acron tell me that my end is near.

When we agreed, O Aspasia, in the beginning of our loves, to communicate our thoughts by writing, even while we were both in Athens, and when we had many reasons for it, we little foresaw the more powerful one that has rendered it necessary of late. We never can meet again. The laws forbid it, and love itself enforces them. Let wisdom be heard by you as imperturbably, and affection as authoritatively, as ever; and remember that the sorrow of Pericles can arise but from the bosom of Aspasia. There is only one word of tenderness we could say, which we have not said oftentimes before; and there

is no consolation in it. The happy never say, and never hear said, farewell.

Then, in a strain at once of composed resignation and exulting retrospect, and in language beneath the austere simplicity of which there throbs the pulse of a passionate emotion, he proceeds to recount the glorious memories of his life.

And now (he concludes) at the close of my day, when every light is dim, and every guest departed, let me own that these wane before me, remembering, as I do, in the pride and fulness of my heart, that Athens confided her glory, and Aspasia her happiness, to me.

Have I been a faithful guardian? Do I resign them to the custody of the gods undiminished and unimpaired? Welcome, then, welcome, my last hour! After enjoying for so great a number of years, in my public and private life, what I believe has never been the lot of any other, I now extend my hand to the urn, and take without reluctance or hesitation what is the lot of all.

The technical scholar, it is true, will find in *Pericles and Aspasia* improbabilities and anachronisms enough; for Landor wrote as usual out of his head, and without renewing his acquaintance with authorities for his special purpose; and his knowledge, astonishing from any other point of view, was from that of technical scholarship incomplete. He did not trouble himself about considerations of this kind, observing rightly enough that Dialogue was not History, and that in a work of imagination some liberties might legitimately be taken with fact. Only then he should have been careful not to quit that sphere of thought and feeling where imagination is lawfully paramount; not to lay aside, as he too often does, the tone of the literary artist for that of the critical and historical inquirer. *Pericles and Aspasia*, like some of the

classical *Conversations*, has the misfortune of being weighted with disquisitions too learned for the general reader, and not sound enough for the special student. But for this drawback, the book is throughout in Landor's best manner. It is full of variety and invention; we pass from the performance of *Prometheus* before the assembled Athenians to Aspasia's account of the dawn of love between herself and Pericles, and of the fascination and frowardness of the boy Alcibiades; to letters which reveal the love-frenzy of the unhappy Xeniades; then to others containing criticisms, accompanied by imaginary specimens, of various greater or minor Greek poets; and thence to original exercises in poetry by the correspondents themselves. One of these, the fragment attempted, we are asked to believe, by Aspasia, on the re-union of Agamemnon and Iphigenia among the shades, Landor always accounted his best piece of dramatic writing in verse. In later editions there are added in this place other scenes exhibiting the vengeance of Orestes, and illustrating the proud and well-founded confidence of originality with which Landor was accustomed to approach anew themes already handled even by the greatest of masters. Besides all this, we have speeches of Pericles on the death of Cimon, the war of Samos, the defection of Megara and of Eubœa, and the policy of Athens against Sparta; speeches brief, compressed, stately, uniting with a careful avoidance of the examples to be found in Thucydides a still more careful observance of the precept, "There is so very much *not* to say." We have the scene in which Aspasia is accused before the assembly, and Pericles defends her. Towards the close of the correspondence we find reflected in it the shadows of war, pestilence, and calamity. Finally, after the death of

Pericles, there are added two letters in which Alcibiades tells Aspasia how he died, and how Cleone, arriving at the house of mourning from Miletus, was seized by infection on the threshold, and staggering towards the garden where Xeniades lay buried, died clasping the tomb of him she had loved in vain.

In all this the strength, conciseness, and harmony of Landor's English style are at their height. The verses in the book are again very unequal; its prose is exemplary and delightful. The properly dramatic parts, the ebb and flow of feeling between Pericles and Aspasia, and between Cleone and Xeniades, are often touched with Landor's utmost, that is, as we have said, with an all but Shakspearian subtlety and justice of insight. The reflective parts are full of sayings as new as they are wise, often illustrated and enforced with images of singular beauty. The spirit of beauty, indeed, reigns, as it reigns in hardly any other modern writing, over the thoughts and language of the characters, and the two volumes are perhaps the richest mine which English prose literature contains of noble and unused quotations.

As if the body of his book were not full enough, Landor must needs append to it two close-packed epilogues written in his own name. One was political, nominally on the Athenian government, but really full of his ideas on modern and especially English politics, on the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the reform of the House of Lords and of the episcopacy; the other literary, containing many of those arguments on language and orthography, intended for insertion in the *Conversations*, of which Landor's original draft had for the present disappeared through the carelessness of Mr. N. P. Willis. That gentleman had in the meantime not a little

scandalized his acquaintances in England by the book in which he had narrated his experiences. To this publication and to his own loss Landor alludes as follows:—"I never look for anything, but I should add disappointment and some degree of inquietude to the loss. I regret the appearance of his book more than the disappearance of mine. . . . Greatly as I have been flattered by the visits of American gentlemen, I hope that for the future no penciller of similar compositions will deviate in my favour to the right hand of the road from Florence to Fiesole. In case of mistake, there is a charming view of the two cities, and of Valdarno and Vallombrosa, from the iron gate at the entrance of my grounds: I could not point out a more advantageous position."

Landor had by this time learnt not to imperil his equanimity by personal dealings with publishers. Mr. G. P. R. James undertook the arrangements for *Pericles and Aspasia*, as Lady Blessington had undertaken those for the *Examination of Shakspeare*. The book was received with delight by a distinguished few, but ignored by the general public. The publisher lost money by it, and Landor, without a word of complaint, insisted on making good the loss. He in like manner paid instead of receiving money for the publication of his next book, the *Pentameron and Pentalogia*. The *Pentameron* is a series of dialogues, connected by a slender thread of narrative, and supposed to have been held on five successive days between Petrarch and Boccaccio, in Boccaccio's villa of Certaldo, during his recovery from an illness and not long before his death. The *Pentalogia*, which follows, is a series of five miscellaneous dramatic scenes entirely independent of the *Pentameron*, and conceived in just the same vein as the shorter, dramatic, imaginary conversations; only written in

blank verse instead of prose. Two of these are from the story of Orestes, and are incorporated in the later editions of *Pericles and Aspasia;* the others are between Essex and Bacon; the Parents of Luther; and William Rufus and Tyrrell; the latter a piece of great vigour and spirit.

In the *Pentameron* Landor is again at his very best. All his study of the great Italian writers of the fourteenth century, and all his recent observations of Tuscan scenery and Tuscan character, are turned to skilful and harmonious account. Landor loved and understood Boccaccio through and through; and if he over-estimated that prolific and amiable genius in comparison with other and greater men, it was an error which for the present purpose was almost an advantage. Nothing can be pleasanter than the intercourse of the two friendly poets as Landor had imagined it; nothing more classically idyllic than the incidental episodes. Even the humour of the piece is successful, in all at least that has to do with the characters of the sly parish priest, the pretty and shrewd servant maid Assuntina, and her bashful lover. True, there occur one or two heavy stories, heavily and ineffectively told. And many lovers of Dante may be shocked at the unsympathetic criticism of that poet which fills a large part of each day's conversation. This is in part consonant with the opinions ascribed traditionally to Petrarch, and in part represents Landor's private judgment. He held Dante to be one of the very greatest of all poets, but thought he showed his true greatness only at rare intervals. Recognizing in poetry, as in history, the part due to the individual alone, Landor holds Dante personally responsible for all those qualities which were imprinted on him by his element and his age. Instead of perceiving in him, as Carlyle taught

the next generation of students to perceive, the "voice" of all the Catholic centuries, the incarnation of the spirit of the Middle Age and of Florence, Landor acknowledged in him only a man of extraordinary genius, who had indulged in the *Inferno* in a great deal of vindictive ferocity, and in the *Paradiso* of barren theological mysticism. Having no sympathy for the Gothic in literature, that is to say, for the fantastic, the unreasonable, and the grim, Landor collects for superfluous and somewhat tedious reprobation examples of these qualities from Dante. He asserts an extravagant disproportion between the good and the bad parts of his work, and fails to do justice even to that unmatched power which Dante exhibits in every page, and which Landor himself shared with him in a remarkable degree, of striking out a visible image in words sudden, massive, and decisive. But all this and more may be forgiven Landor for the sake of such criticism as he devotes to those parts of Dante which he does admire. On the episode of Piero and Francesca, he has put into the mouth of Boccaccio the following comments :—

Petrarca. The thirty lines from *Ed io sentì*, are unequalled by any other continuous thirty in the whole dominions of poetry.

Boccacio. Give me rather the six on Francesca : for if in the former I find the simple, vigorous, clear narration, I find also what I would not wish, the features of Ugolino reflected full in Dante. The two characters are similar in themselves ; hard, cruel, inflexible, malignant, but, whenever moved, moved powerfully. In Francesca, with the faculty of divine spirits, he leaves his own nature (not indeed the exact representative of theirs), and converts all his strength into tenderness. The great poet, like the original man of the Platonists, is double, possessing the further advantage of being able to drop one half at his option, and to resume it. Some of the tenderest on

paper have no sympathies beyond; and some of the austerest in their intercourse with their fellow-creatures, have deluged the world with tears. It is not from the rose that the bee gathers honey, but often from the most acrid and most bitter leaves and petals.

> Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
> Esser baciato di cotanto amante,
> Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso!
> La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante . . .
> *Galeotto* fù il libro, e chi lo scrisse . . .
> Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante.

In the midst of her punishment, Francesca, when she comes to the tenderest part of her story, tells it with complacency and delight; and, instead of naming Paolo, which indeed she never has done from the beginning, she now designates him as

> Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso!

Are we not impelled to join in her prayer, wishing them happier in their union?

Petrarca. If there be no sin in it.

Boccacio. Ay, and even if there be . . . God help us! What a sweet aspiration in each çesura of the verse! three love-sighs fixt and incorporate! Then when she hath said

> La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante,

she stops: she would avert the eyes of Dante from her: he looks for the sequel: she thinks he looks severely: she says, "*Galeotto* is the name of the book," fancying by this timorous little flight she has drawn him far enough from the nest of her young loves. No, the eagle beak of Dante and his piercing eyes are yet over her. "*Galeotto* is the name of the book." "What matters that?" "And of the writer." "Or that either?" At last she disarms him: but how? "*That* day we read no more." Such a depth of intuitive judgment, such a delicacy of perception, exists not in any other work of human genius.

It is a part of Landor's own delicacy in handling the passage that he postpones until another time the mention

of its one flaw; namely the fact that *Galeotto* is really an equivalent for *Pandarus*. Next to this example of what Landor could do in criticism, let us take, also from the *Pentameron*, an example of what he could do in allegory. This was a form of composition for which Landor had in general some contempt, especially when, as by Spenser, it was used as a foundation more or less shifting and dubious for an independent structure of romance. But the direct and unambiguous use of allegory in illustration of human life and experience he thought occasionally permissible, and no one except the object of his aversion, Plato, has used it as well. Petrarch's allegory, or rather dream, in the Pentameron, is of love, sleep, and death. It is an example unmatched, as I think, in literature, of the union of Greek purity of outline with Florentine poignancy of sentiment. The oftener we read it, the more strongly it attracts and holds us by the treble charm of its quiet, sober cadences, its luminous imagery, and its deep, consolatory wisdom. The thoughts and feelings concerning life and the issues of life which it translates into allegorical shape will be found to yield more and more meaning the closer they are grasped :—

I had reflected for some time on this subject (the use and misuse of allegory, says Petrarch), when, wearied with the length of my walk over the mountains, and finding a soft old mole-hill covered with grey grass by the wayside, I laid my head upon it and slept. I cannot tell how long it was before a species of dream or vision came over me.

Two beautiful youths appeared beside me; each was winged; but the wings were hanging down, and seemed ill adapted to flight. One of them, whose voice was the softest I ever heard, looking at me frequently, said to the other, "He is under my guardianship for the present; do not awaken him with that feather." Methought, on hearing the whisper, I saw

something like the feather of an arrow, and then the arrow itself—the whole of it, even to the point; although he carried it in such a manner that it was difficult at first to discover more than a palm's length of it; the rest of the shaft (and the whole of the barb) was behind his ancles.

"This feather never awakens any one," replied he rather petulantly, "but it brings more of confident security, and more of cherished dreams than you, without me, are capable of imparting."

"Be it so," answered the gentler, "none is less inclined to quarrel or dispute than I am. Many whom you have wounded grievously call upon me for succour, but so little am I disposed to thwart you it is seldom I venture to do more for them than to whisper a few words of comfort in passing. How many reproaches on these occasions have been cast upon me for indifference and infidelity! Nearly as many and nearly in the same terms as upon you."

"Odd enough that we, O sleep! should be thought so alike!" said Love contemptuously. "Yonder is he who bears a nearer resemblance to you; the dullest have observed it."

I fancied I turned my eyes to where he was pointing, and saw at a distance the figure he designated. Meanwhile the contention went on uninterruptedly. Sleep was slow in asserting his power or his benefits. Love recapitulated them, but only that he might assert his own above them. Suddenly he called on me to decide, and to choose my patron. Under the influence, first of the one, then of the other, I sprang from repose to rapture; I alighted from rapture on repose, and knew not which was sweetest. Love was very angry with me, and declared he would cross me throughout the whole of my existence. Whatever I might on other occasions have thought of his veracity I now felt too surely the conviction that he would keep his word. At last, before the close of the altercation, the third genius had advanced, and stood near us. I cannot tell how I knew him, but I knew him to be the genius of Death. Breathless as I was at beholding him, I soon became familiar with his features. First they seemed only calm; presently they became contemplative, and lastly beautiful;

those of the Graces themselves are less regular, less harmonious, less composed. Love glanced at him unsteadily, with a countenance in which there was somewhat of anxiety, somewhat of disdain, and cried, "Go away! go away! Nothing that thou touchest lives."

"Say rather, child!" replied the advancing form, and advancing grew loftier and statelier, say rather that nothing of beautiful or of glorious lives its own true life until my wing hath passed over it."

Love pouted, and rumpled and bent down with his forefinger the stiff short feathers on his arrow-head, but replied not. Although he frowned worse than ever, and at me, I dreaded him less and less, and scarcely looked toward him. The milder and calmer genius, the third, in proportion as I took courage to contemplate him, regarded me with more and more complacency. He held neither flower nor arrow, as the others did; but throwing back the clusters of dark curls that overshadowed his countenance, he presented to me his hand, openly and benignly. I shrank on looking at him so near, and yet I sighed to love him. He smiled, not without an expression of pity, at perceiving my diffidence, my timidity; for I remembered how soft was the hand of Sleep, how warm and entrancing was Love's. By degrees I grew ashamed of my ingratitude, and turning my face away, I held out my arms and felt my neck within his. Composure allayed all the throbbings of my bosom, the coolness of freshest morning breathed around, the heavens seemed to open above me, while the beautiful cheek of my deliverer rested on my head. I would now have looked for those others, but, knowing my intention by my gesture, he said consolatorily,—

"Sleep is on his way to the earth, where many are calling him, but it is not to them he hastens; for every call only makes him fly further off. Sedately and gravely as he looks, he is nearly as capricious and volatile as the more arrogant and ferocious one."

"And Love," said I, "whither is he departed? If not too late I would propitiate and appease him."

"He who cannot follow me, he who cannot overtake and pass me," said the genius, "is unworthy of the name, the

most glorious in earth or heaven. Look up! Love is yonder, and ready to receive thee."

I looked; the earth was under me; I saw only the clear blue sky, and something brighter above it.

The *Pentameron* bears on its title-page the date 1837. Before the book appeared a great change had come over Landor's life. He had said farewell to his beautiful home at Fiesole; had turned his back upon his children; uprooted himself from all his household pleasures and occupations; and come back to live alone in England. In a poem introduced into the *Pentameron* itself, in which those pleasures and occupations are more fully described than in any other of his writings, he looks upon them already as things of the past. The piece is nominally quoted by Boccaccio as the work of an Italian gentleman forced to leave his country; it is really an address written by Landor from England to his youngest son "Carlino."

To this second disruption of his home Landor had been forced by renewed dissensions with his wife. The Fiesolan household had in truth been below the surface no harmonious or well-ordered one. A husband absorbed in his own imaginings, a wife more ready to make herself agreeable to any one else than to her husband, children devotedly loved, but none the less allowed to run wild, here were of themselves elements enough of domestic shipwreck. Add to this that Landor's own occasional bursts of passion would seem to have met more than their match in Mrs. Landor's persistent petulance of opposition. The immediate cause of his departure he himself, and at least one friendly witness, alleged to have been the language repeatedly, and in the face of all remonstrances, addressed to him by his wife in presence of the children. This Landor had felt to be alike

demoralizing to them and humiliating to himself, and had determined to endure it no longer. He left his home in the spring of 1835; spent the summer by himself at the Baths of Lucca; reached England early in the autumn, stayed for three months with his friend Ablett at Llanbedr, and then went for the winter to Clifton. Next year he was for a long time again at Llanbedr, after which he stayed for a while in London, renewing old friendships and forming new. In the meantime friends of both sides of the house had been endeavouring to bring about some kind of arrangement between the husband and wife. In the interests of the children, over whom Mrs. Landor confessed that she had no control, it was proposed that while they and she should continue to live together, whether in England or abroad, Landor should establish himself, if not under the same roof, at any rate close by. At one time it was settled that the children should come to meet their father in Germany, and with that view Landor travelled to Heidelberg in September, 1836. But they never came, nor were any of the other proposed arrangements in the end found practicable. Landor's children remained with their mother at Fiesole; letters and presents continued to be exchanged between them and their father; twice or thrice in the coming years they came to visit him in England; but they were practically lost to him henceforward. With his wife's relations living in this country he continued to be on perfectly cordial terms. The winter of 1836-37 he passed, like the last, at Clifton, where he and Southey, whose health and strength began about this time to fail, once more enjoyed the happiness of each other's society. From Clifton Landor went again, as on the previous year, first to stay with Ablett at Llanbedr, and then with Lady Bles-

sington, now widowed, in London. The rest of the summer having been spent in visits at Torquay and Plymouth, he finally settled down, in October, 1837, at Bath; and from this date a new period in his life begins.

The two years between Landor's departure from Fiesole and his establishment at Bath had not been idly spent. The last touches had been added to *Pericles and Aspasia*, and a good deal of the *Pentameron* had been for the first time written, either at the Baths of Lucca, or afterwards in England. Other minor publications had quickly followed. First an Irish squib in verse, of which the less said the better, directed against the morality of the priesthood, and entitled *Terry Hogan*. Next a political pamphlet in the form of letters addressed to Lord Melbourne, and called *Letters of a Conservative*. The particular point to which these letters is directed is the remedy of episcopal abuses in Wales; but they contain much political and personal matter of interest besides. For one thing they inform us of, what students of Landor seem hitherto to have overlooked, the precise shape which his long-cherished project of a history of his own times had latterly assumed, and of the end to which it had come.

It is known to many distinguished men, literary and political, of both parties, that I have long been occupied in writing a work, which I thought to entitle *The Letters of a Conservative*. In these I attempted to trace and to expose the faults and fallacies of every administration, from the beginning of the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. I was born at the opening of that year; and many have been my opportunities of conversing, at home and abroad, with those who partook in the events that followed it. . . . .
I threw these papers into the fire; no record of them is existing.

Landor's reason for destroying his work had been the creditable one that its reprehension of some living states-

men had come to him to seem more strong than was desirable to publish. In the course of the far narrower argument to which his present *Letters* are directed, Landor finds occasion for these extremely characteristic observations on the national and religious characteristics of the Welsh, to whom, after his prolonged visits at Llanbedr, he feels more kindly now than of yore, in comparison with those of the Irish:—

In the Irish we see the fire and vivacity of a southern people: their language, their religion, every thought is full of images. They have been, and ever must be, idolaters. Do not let their good clergy be angry with me for the expression. I mean no harm by it. Firmly do I believe that the Almighty is too merciful and too wise for anger or displeasure at it. Would one of these kind-hearted priests be surly at being taken for another? Certainly not: and quite as certainly the Maker of mankind will graciously accept their gratitude, whether the offering be laid in the temple or on the turf, whether in the enthusiasm of the heart, before a beautiful image, expressing love and benignity, or, without any visible object, in the bleak and desart air.

The Welshman is serious, concentrated and morose; easily offended, not easily appeased; strongly excited by religious zeal; but there is melancholy in the musick of his mind. Cimmerian gloom is hanging still about his character; and his God is the God of the mountain and the storm.

One more equally characteristic quotation, and we may close the *Letters of a Conservative.*

The Bishop of London groaned at an apparition in Ireland: and a horrible one it was indeed. A clergyman was compelled by the severity of Fortune, or, more Christianly speaking, by the wiles and maliciousness of Satan, to see his son work in his garden.

Had the right reverend baron passed my house, early in the morning, or late in the evening, the chances are that he would

have found me doing the same thing, and oftentimes more unprofitably; that is, planting trees from which some other will gather the fruit. Would his mitred head have turned giddy to see me on a ladder, pruning or grafting my peaches? I should have been sorry for it, not being used to come down until my work was over, even when visitors no less illustrious than the right reverend baron have called on me. But we have talked together in our relative stations; I above, they below.

Besides this, Landor contributed in 1837 to Leigh Hunt's *Monthly Repository* a series of dialogues and letters called *High and Low Life in Italy*, which are good in proportion to their gravity; the majority, being facetious, are somewhat forced and dreary. A rare volume, and one much cherished by the lovers of Landor, is that which Mr. Ablett printed for private distribution in this same year 1837. It contains a lithograph from Count d'Orsay's profile of Landor drawn in 1825; a dedication or inscription two pages long, and in the most mincingly ceremonious vein, to Mrs. Ablett by her husband, and a selection from the *Conversations* and other fugitive pieces which Landor had contributed to various periodicals since his visit to England five years before; besides some extracts from Leigh Hunt, and one or two effusions which appear to be Mr. Ablett's own.

Lastly Landor printed, still in the autumn of 1837, a pamphlet in rhyming couplets which he called *A Satire on Satirists, and Admonition to Detractors.* This is an attempt in a manner of writing which he had abandoned since boyhood. Landor had allowed himself for once to be irritated by a review; an attack, namely, on his scholarship (accompanied, it should be said, with general criticisms of a laudatory kind) which had appeared in *Blackwood.* He now indulged, clumsily it must be confessed, in the

somewhat stale entertainment of baiting Scotch reviewers. The only things which make the *Satire* noteworthy are the lines in which Landor alludes to his own scene of Agamemnon and Iphigenia,—

> Far from the footstool of the tragic throne,
> I am tragedian in this scene alone,—

and the passages in which he allows himself to turn against the old object of his respect and admiration, Wordsworth. He had been letting certain remarks uttered by or attributed to Wordsworth rankle in his mind. He had begun to discover, during his visit in 1832, the narrow intellectual sympathies of that great poet, and his indifference to the merits of nearly all poetry except his own. Now again, in the summer of 1837, Landor had seen or imagined Wordsworth cold, while every one else was enthusiastic, when they were present together at the first night of Talfourd's *Ion*. Lastly, it had been related to him that Wordsworth had said he would not give five shillings a ream for the poetry of Southey. Never in the least degree jealous on his own account, Landor was intensely so on account of his friend, and forgetting the life-long intimacy and regard of Wordsworth and Southey, thought proper to call the former to account as a "Detractor." The lines in which he does so are not good; they hit what was to some extent really a blot in Wordsworth's nature; but they had much better never have been written; and we think with regret of the old phrases of regard—"*vir, civis, philosophe, poeta, præstantissime*," and "When 'mid their light thy light appears." Wordsworth, to whose notice the attack was only brought some time after it appeared, was little ruffled by it. Neither was Landor on his part, when Crabbe Robinson strongly

remonstrated with him on his Satire, the least offended. Among other things, Landor had referred to his own lines on the Shell, from *Gebir*, as being "the bar from which Wordsworth drew his wire" in a nearly analogous passage of the *Excursion*. Wordsworth denied any conscious imitation. It may at this point not be without interest to compare Landor's original lines, the best known in all his poetry, with those in which they were thus echoed by his brother poets, accidentally, it seems, by Wordsworth, and avowedly by Byron. In the original it is the sea-nymph who proposes the shell as an appropriate forfeit to be paid by her to Tamar if he beats her in wrestling:—

> But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
> Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
> In the Sun's palace-porch, where, when unyoked,
> His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave,
> Shake one, and it awakens; then apply
> Its polisht lip to your attentive ear,
> And it remembers its august abodes,
> And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

Byron's lines in the *Island* compare the subdued sound of the sea at sunset with that to be heard in the shell; and it is of a piece with his usual swinging carelessness that the "murmurer" of one line is made to "rave" three lines further on:—

> The Ocean scarce spoke louder with his swell
> Than breathes his mimic murmurer in the shell,
> As, far divided from his parent deep,
> The sea-born infant cries, and will not sleep,
> Raising his little plaint in vain, to rave
> For the broad bosom of his nursing wave.

Wordsworth turns the phenomenon to account for the purposes of a fine metaphysical and didactic metaphor,

describing it at the same time in lines which, compared with any of those in the passage from *Gebir* except the fourth and fifth, are somewhat lumbering and diluted. The shell, Landor said, had in this version lost its pearly hue within, and its memory of where it had abided.

> I have seen
> A curious child who dwelt upon a tract
> Of inland ground, applying to his ear
> The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
> To which, in silence hush'd, his very soul
> Listen'd intensely; and his countenance soon
> Brighten'd with joy; for murmurings from within
> Were heard, sonorous cadences! whereby,
> To his belief, the monitor express'd
> Mysterious union with its native sea.
> Even such a Shell the universe itself
> Is to the ear of faith.

In Landor's general criticisms on Wordsworth's poetry, from this time forward, there is perceptible less change of tone than in those on his person. The great achievement of Wordsworth, his poetical revelation of a sympathy, more close and binding than had ever before been expressed in words, between the hearts of nature and of man, had in it too much of the metaphysical for Landor at any time fully to appreciate. But now as formerly, Wordsworth remained for Landor a fine poet, although marred by puerility and dulness; the best of all poets of country life; the author of the best sonnets, after one or two of Milton, in the language, and in his *Laodamia* of at least one poem classical both in thought and expression.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AT BATH—DRAMAS—HELLENICS—LAST FRUIT—DRY STICKS.

(1837—1858.)

DURING the two unsettled years that followed his return to England, Landor, as we have seen, continued to write as industriously as ever. Neither is there perceptible in the works so produced the shadow of any severe inward struggle or distress. Did Landor then really, we cannot help asking ourselves, feel very deeply the breaking up of his beautiful Italian home or not? A few years before he could not bear his children to be out of his sight even for a day; did he suffer as we should have expected him to suffer at his total separation from them now?

The poem of which mention has been made in the last chapter treats of their pleasures and occupations at the Villa Gherardesca in a tone of affectionate, but by no means inconsolable, regret. Another retrospective piece written at Torquay in 1837 touches on the same matters in a still lighter strain. A brief and probably somewhat earlier *Farewell to Italy*, in blank verse, is a good deal graver in its tone; but the only instance, except once or twice in his letters, in which Landor writes of his changed life in a strain at all approaching despondency, is in the following set of verses

composed on one of his birthdays; verses which happen also to be among his best; classically simple and straightforward in thought and diction, and in cadence unusually full and solemn :—

The day returns, my natal day,
  Borne on the storm and pale with snow,
And seems to ask me why I stay,
  Stricken by Time and bow'd by Woe.

Many were once the friends who came
  To wish me joy; and there are some
Who wish it now; but not the same;
  They are whence friends can never come;

Nor are they you my love watcht o'er
  Cradled in innocence and sleep;
You smile into my eyes no more,
  Nor see the bitter tears they weep.

The same question which we have thus been led to ask ourselves as to the depth or lack of depth in Landor's private and domestic feelings, seems to have been addressed to him in person by some friend about this time. Here is his reply :—

So, then, I feel not deeply! if I did,
I should have seized the pen and pierced therewith
The passive world!
                                  And thus thou reasonest?
Well hast thou known the lover's, not so well
The poet's heart: while that heart bleeds, the hand
Presses it close. Grief must run on and pass
Into near Memory's more quiet shade
Before it can compose itself in song.
He who is agonized and turns to show
His agony to those who sit around,
Seizes the pen in vain: thought, fancy, power,
Rush back into his bosom; all the strength
Of genius cannot draw them into light
From under mastering Grief; but Memory,

The Muse's mother, nurses, rears them up,
Informs, and keeps them with her all her days.

As a critical reflection of general application, there is justice in the thought here expressed with so much gracefulness and precision; but as solving the point raised in relation to Landor's own character, the answer can hardly be taken as sufficient. We must remember on the one hand that his principles, both in life and literature, tended towards the suppression and control of emotion rather than towards its indulgence and display. In life his ambition was to walk "with Epicurus on the right hand and Epictetus on the left:" in literature, to attain the balance and self-governance of the Greeks. For the former effort, Landor's character unfitted him; his temperament was too strong for his philosophy; in the latter effort he succeeded, and a part of the peculiar quality of his writing proceeds from its expression of the most impetuous feelings and judgments in a style of classical sobriety and reserve. But stormy as was Landor's nature upon the surface, we may still doubt whether its depths were ever so strongly moved by the things of real life as by the things of imagination. The bitterest tears he shed would seem by his own confession to have been those which were drawn from him, not by the sorrows and estrangements of his own experience, but by moving passages of literature, and the misfortunes of old-world heroines and heroes. "Most things," he writes to Lady Blessington, "are real to me except realities." The realities moreover which did affect him were chiefly the realities of to-day, and not those of yesterday or to-morrow. A wrench once made, a tie once broken, he could accommodate himself without too much suffering to the change. Neither the sense of continuity nor the sense of responsibility

in human relations seems to have been practically very strong in him. The injury done to his children by leaving them subject to no discipline at such an age and in such surroundings, would appear hardly to have weighed on Landor's mind at all, and that it failed to do so is, I think, the most serious blot upon his character.

His own answer would have been that to separate the children from their mother would have been cruel, and to let them continue witnesses of her altercations with himself, impossible. The visits which as they grew up they came at long intervals to pay him in England, were at first ardently anticipated, but failed to lead to any relations of close or lasting sympathy. In all that concerned their material welfare, he had in the meanwhile shown himself as unreservedly generous as ever. Landor's estates of Llanthony and Ipsley were yielding at this time upwards of three thousand pounds a year, of which mortgages and insurances absorbed every year about fourteen hundred. Out of the remaining sixteen hundred a year, he had been in the habit during his life at Fiesole of spending altogether not much over six, allowing the balance to accumulate for the benefit of his younger children. When he left Fiesole, he dispossessed himself, in the interest of his eldest son Arnold, of his property in the villa, with its farms and gardens, which of themselves were almost sufficient for the support of the family. At the same time he made over to Mrs. Landor two-thirds of the income which he had been accustomed to spend while they were all under one roof, reserving to himself the other third only, that is about two hundred pounds a year. Finding this after a year or two's experience in England insufficient, he allowed himself as much more out of the share hitherto suffered to accumulate for the

younger children, making four hundred pounds a year in all. On this income Landor lived, and was perfectly content to live, in the solitary home which he had by this time made for himself in a Bath lodging.

His solitude was not morose or devoid of consolations. In Bath itself he found friends after his own heart, and first among them Colonel, afterwards Sir William, Napier, the historian of the Peninsular War, with whom for years it was Landor's habit to spend a part of almost every day. He enjoyed moreover the tender regard and devotion of his wife's niece, Teresita Stopford, afterwards Lady Charles Beauclerk, as well as of another young lady, Rose Paynter, now Lady Sawle, a connexion of the Aylmer family, whose name and lineage revived old days and old affections in his mind. He was accustomed during the earlier part of his Bath life to pay visits nearly every year to a certain number of chosen friends, and most regularly of all to Lady Blessington. Throughout the long strain and fever of her brilliant, irregular social career at Gore House, beset by cares and crowds, and hard pressed by the consequences of her own and D'Orsay's profusion, this lady never lost the warmth and constancy of heart which so rarely accompany promiscuous hospitality, yet without which hospitality is but dust and ashes. She taught Landor to regard Gore House as a kind of second home, and he came to entertain quite a tender feeling for the room which was always kept for him there, and especially for a certain lilac and a certain laurel that used to come into blossom about the time of his yearly visit. At Gore House he made, and from time to time refreshed, an acquaintance with many of the most distinguished men of the then rising generation. His closest friends of that generation were Forster and

Dickens, who attached themselves to him, the former especially, with an enthusiastic warmth of admiration and regard. Besides Lady Blessington, we find Landor in the habit of paying visits to his old friend Kenyon at Wimbledon, to Julius Hare, now installed as archdeacon at the family living of Hurstmonceaux, to Ablett in Wales, to Lord Nugent near Aylesbury, to Sir William Molesworth at Pencarrow, to his brother Robert in his beautiful rectory at Birlingham, to his sisters at Warwick, and to his wife's sisters at Richmond.

Wherever Landor went he made the same impression, which was that of a king and a lion among men. In appearance he had gained greatly with age. As sturdy and as florid as ever, he was now in addition beautifully venerable. His bold and keen grey eyes retained all their power, his teeth remained perfectly strong and white, but his forehead had become bald and singularly imposing, high-vaulted, broad and full beneath its thick white fringe of backward-flowing hair. Every man's face, as has been truly said, is in great part his own making; and the characters which time had imprinted on Landor's were not those of his transient bursts of fury, but those of his habitual moods of lofty thought and tender feeling. All the lines of his countenance were large and, except when the fit was upon him, full of benignity, his smile especially being of an inexpressible sweetness. His movements were correspondingly massive, but at the same time clumsy; not, of course, with the clumsiness of ill-breeding, but rather with that of aimlessness and inefficiency. The physical signs of the unpractical man were indeed all of them written upon Landor. He had short arms, with constrained movements of the elbows, and even when his fists were clenched in wrath, there was a noticeable

relaxation about the thumbs, a thing never yet seen to accompany tenacity of practical will or tact in practical dealings. He would put his spectacles up over his forehead, and after oversetting everything in the wildest search for them, submit himself with desperate resignation to their loss. In travelling he would give himself worlds of trouble to remember the key of his portmanteau, but utterly forget the portmanteau itself; and when he discovered that he had lost it, he would launch out into an appalling picture of the treachery and depravity of the railway officials concerned, and of their fathers and grandfathers to the remotest generation. Next, after a moment's silence, the humourous view of the case would present itself to him, and he would begin to laugh, quietly at first, and then in louder and ever louder volleys, until the room shook again, and the commotion seemed as if it would never stop. These tempests of hilarity seemed to some of Landor's friends almost as formidable as the tempests of anger to which he continued to be subject at the suspicion of a contradiction or a slight. But both were well worth undergoing for the sake of such noble and winning company as was that of Landor in his ordinary moods. Then not only was his talk incomparably rich and full, it was delivered with such a courtly charm of manner and address, such a rotundity, mellowness, and old-world grace of utterance as were irresistible. His voice, especially in reading aloud, was as sympathetic as it was powerful; "fibrous in all its tones, whether gentle or fierce," says Lord Houghton; deep, rich, and like the noblest music, "with a small, inartificial quiver striking to the heart," adds another witness who by-and-by attached herself to the grand old man with a filial devotion, and who has left us the most life-like as well as the most affec-

tionate portrait of him during these years.[1] His pronunciation of certain words was that traditional in many old English families; "yaller" and "laylock" for yellow and lilac, "go͝old," "Room," and "woonderful," for gold, Rome, and wonderful.

Even at his wildest, Landor's demeanour to his pet animals furnished assurance enough that his fury was much more loud than deep, and that the quality most rooted in his nature was its gentleness. Dickens has best embodied this impression in his character of Mr. Boythorn in *Bleak House,* which is drawn, as is well known, from Landor, with his intellectual greatness left out. We all remember how Mr. Boythorn softly caresses his canary with his forefinger, at the same time as he thunders out defiance and revenge against Sir Leicester Dedlock; "He brings actions for trespass; I bring actions for trespass. He brings actions for assault and battery; I defend them, and continue to assault and batter. Ha! Ha! Ha!" Landor's great pet in these days was not really a canary, but a yellow Pomeranian dog, all vivacity, affection, and noise, who was sent him from Fiesole in 1844, and became the delight and companion of his life. With "Pomero" Landor would prattle in English and Italian as affectionately as a mother with her child. Pomero was his darling, the wisest and most beautiful of his race; Pomero had the brightest eyes and the most woonderful yaller tail ever seen. Sometimes it was Landor's humour to quote Pomero in speech and writing as a kind of sagacious elder brother, whose opinion had to be consulted on all subjects before he would deliver his own. This creature accompanied his master wherever he went, barking "not

[1] See Prefatory Note, No. 10.

fiercely, but familiarly" at friend and stranger, and when they came in, would either station himself upon his master's head to watch the people passing in the street, or else lie curled up in his basket until Landor, in talk with some visitor, began to laugh, and his laugh to grow and grow, when Pomero would spring up, and leap upon and fume about him, barking and screaming for sympathy until the whole street resounded. The two together, master and dog, were for years to be encountered daily on their walks about Bath and its vicinity, and there are many who perfectly well remember them; the majestic old man, looking not a whit the less impressive for his rusty and dusty brown suit, his bulging boots, his rumpled linen, or his battered hat; and his noisy, soft-haired, quick-glancing, inseparable companion.

Landor's habits were to breakfast at nine, and write principally before noon. His mode of writing was peculiar; he would sit absorbed in apparently vacant thought, but inwardly giving the finishing touches to the verses or the periods which he had last been maturing while he walked or lay awake at night; when he was ready, he would seize suddenly on one of the many scraps of paper and one of the many stumps of swan's-quill that usually lay at hand; and would write down what was in his head hastily, in his rough sloping characters, sprawling or compressed according to the space, and dry the written paper in the ashes. At two he dined, either alone or in the company of some single favoured friend, often on viands which he had himself bought and dressed, and with the accompaniment, when the meal was shared by a second person, of a few glasses of some famous vintage from the family cellar. In the afternoon he walked several miles in all weathers, having a special preference for a village near

Bath, Widcombe, in the beautiful churchyard of which he had now determined that he should be buried. From about seven in the evening, after the simplest possible tea, he generally read till late at night. His walls were covered with bad pictures, which he bought cheap, as formerly from the dealers of Florence, so now from those of Bath, and which his imagination endowed with every sign and every circumstance of authenticity.

In this manner twenty long years went by, during which Landor passed with little abatement of strength from elderly to patriarchal age. As time went on the habits of his life changed almost imperceptibly. The circuit of his walks grew narrower; his visits to London and elsewhere less frequent. His friends of the younger generation, Dickens and Forster especially and without fail, were accustomed every year to run down to Bath and bear him company on his birthday, the 30th of January. Carlyle, whose temper of hero-worship found much that was congenial in Landor's writings, and who delighted in the sterling and vigorous qualities of the man, once made the same journey in order to visit him. I do not know whether the invitation was ever accepted which Landor addressed to another illustrious junior in the following scrap of friendly doggrel.

I entreat you, Alfred Tennyson,
Come and share my haunch of venison.
I have too a bin of claret,
Good, but better when you share it.
Tho' 'tis only a small bin,
There's a stock of it within.
And as sure as I'm a rhymer,
Half a butt of Rudesheimer.
Come; among the sons of men is one
Welcomer than Alfred Tennyson?

With several of the younger poets and men of letters of those days, Landor's prompt and cordial recognition of literary excellence had put him on terms of the friendliest correspondence and regard. But his friends of his own standing were beginning to fall about him fast.

> We hurry to the river we must cross,
>   And swifter downward every footstep wends;
> Happy who reach it ere they count the loss
>   Of half their faculties and half their friends."

Thus Landor had written in his ode to Southey in 1833. Six years later Southey's mind had suddenly given way, and in 1843 he died, the name of Landor having been one of the last upon his lips while a glimmering of consciousness remained to him. Of the various tributes to his memory which Landor wrote at the time, that in the form of a vision, beginning

> It was a dream, ah! what is not a dream?

is conspicuous for its beauty, singularity, and tenderness. Francis Hare had died in middle age at Palermo three years earlier. Landor's next great loss was that of his dear friend and loyal admirer Ablett, who died in 1848. Within two years followed the death of Landor's brother Charles, and almost at the same time that of Lady Blessington. The long-impending crash had at last overtaken the establishment in Gore House; the house itself had been sold with all its contents and adjacencies; Count d'Orsay had followed the fortunes of Louis Napoleon to France, whither Lady Blessington soon went also, and where she died in 1850 at St. Germain. Again Landor has commemorated his affection and his sense of his loss in his best vein of graceful and meditative verse. It had been one of Landor's great consolations during a

portion of his life at Bath that Madame de Molandé had been living in that city with her grandchildren. In August, 1851, she too died in France. It was just forty-five years since he had written his lament for the necessity which forced them to part in the days of their early passion :—

> Ianthe, thou art called across the sea,
> A path forbidden *me!*

Let us quote in this connexion, not any of the commemmorative lines which Landor wrote on receiving the news of her death, but rather those other verses of grave self-confidence and assured appeal to the ages with which, it does not appear precisely at what date, he set a fitting and final seal on the poetry referring to this episode of his life.

> Well I remember how you smiled
> To see me write your name upon
> The soft sea-sand. . . *O! what a child!*
> *You think you're writing upon stone!*
>
> I have since written what no tide
> Shall ever wash away, what men
> Unborn shall read o'er ocean wide,
> And find Ianthe's name again.

All these deaths would naturally have prepared Landor's mind for his own, had he stood in need of such preparation. But he had long faced that contingency with the same composure with which others are encouraged to face it in so many of his tender and heroic admonitions. Of each successive birthday as it came round he felt as though it might naturally be his last. It was on the morning after his seventy-fifth that he wrote and read aloud before breakfast those lines which he afterwards prefixed to the volume called *Last Fruit* :—

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife,
>   Nature I loved, and, next to nature, Art;
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
>   It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Infinitely touching seemed his dignified, resigned air and beautiful manly voice to the girlish friend whom he at this time called daughter, and who was standing by as he read; and when he saw how he had brought the tears into her eyes, the old man came across and patted her shoulder, saying, " My good child! I really think you love your father almost as well as Pomero does." But the summons to depart was destined to come to many another yet of those dear to Landor before it came to himself. Within three years after the losses last mentioned, there followed those of his sister Elizabeth and of his ever-faithful friend, the accomplished and pure-hearted Julius Hare. By his lips, as by Southey's, Landor's was one of the last names ever spoken. Next went Kenyon; and next, having lived beyond the common age of his kind, died Pomero, leaving the daily footsteps of the old man more alone than ever.

But it is time that we should go back, and acquaint ourselves with the nature of the work in literature which Landor had been doing during this long autumn of his life in England. His whole literary career may best, I think, be divided into three periods; the first of twenty-six years, from 1795 to 1821; the second of sixteen, from 1821 to 1837; and the third, incredible as it sounds, again of twenty-six, from 1837 to 1863. The first period, as we have seen, was one of experiment only partially felicitous; experiment chiefly in the highest kinds of poetry and in the serious employment of Latin for the purposes of original modern writing; its principal achievements are *Gebir*, *Count Julian*, and the *Idyllia Heroica*.

The second period, from 1821 to 1837, that is from Landor's forty-sixth year to his sixty-second, is the period of his central and greatest work, consisting chiefly of dramatic or quasi-dramatic writings in prose; its principal achievements are the *Imaginary Conversations*, the *Examination of Shakspeare*, *Pericles and Aspasia*, and the *Pentameron*. The third period, upon which we have now entered, includes all the rest of Landor's life from his sixty-second year to his eighty-eighth (1837—1863), and is one of miscellaneous production in many kinds of writing, with a preponderance on the whole of verse. From composition in one form or another Landor never rested long. He declared over and over again his unalterable resolution to give up writing, sometimes in a fit of disgust, sometimes lest as he grew older his powers should fail him unawares. But such resolutions were no sooner made than broken. He worked now to satisfy his own impulse, now to please a friend who was also an editor. In all his literary undertakings throughout this third period, he was in the habit of acting on the advice and with the help of Mr. Forster; advice generally discreet, and help at all times ungrudging. The misfortune is that this most unselfish of friends should have proved also the least self-forgetful of biographers, and the least capable of keeping his own services in the background.

Landor's first important publication during the Bath period was in the form of dramatic verse. Being laid up with a sprained ancle, he occupied himself with composing first one play and then another on the story of Giovanna of Naples. In reality that story is as dark with crime and uncertainty, and as lightning-lit with flashes of romance, and with the spell of beauty accused yet worshipped, as is the story of Mary Queen of Scots

herself. Landor's version of it corresponds to none that will be found in histories. "I am a horrible confounder of historical facts," he writes. "I have usually one history that I have read, and another that I have invented." It was like his chivalry that he as a matter of course took the favourable view of the queen's character, and like his hatred of the Romish priesthood that he made the court confessor, Fra Rupert, the villain of his plot and the contriver of the murder of the queen's husband. The first of his two plays Landor named after the victim of the murder, Andrea of Hungary; the second after the queen herself. The volume appeared in 1839, with a prologue in verse addressed to his young friend "Rose," and an intimation that the profits of the sale were intended to be handed over to Grace Darling. From first to last it was Landor's habit thus to destine to some charitable object the profits which in perfect good faith, and in defiance of reiterated experience, his imagination invariably anticipated from the sale of his works.

Within a couple of years Landor had written and published separately yet another play, which completed this Neapolitan trilogy, and which he called after the name of the villain *Fra Rupert.* The scenes of this trilogy are as deficient in sustained construction and dramatic sequence as *Count Julian* itself. They are pitched in a lower key, and written with more variety of style, than that unmitigated and Titanic tragedy. The character of the young king, with his boorish training and his chivalrous nature, from the neglected soil of which all the latent virtues are drawn forth by the loving wisdom of Giovanna, is a new conception excellently worked out. The figure of Fra Rupert, on the other hand, and that of Rienzi, seem to me types somewhat

written by Robert Landor are better than any by lustrious brother. There was much in common en the two men. Robert Landor had nearly every- of Walter except the passionate energy of his rament and his genius. He was an admirable ır, and in his dramas of *Count Arezzi, The Earl of n, Faith's Fraud,* and *The Ferryman,* and his di- romances, *The Fountain of Arethusa* and the *Fawn rtorius,* he shows himself master of a sound English and a pure and vigorous vein of feeling and inven-

Personally, he was the prince of gentlemen; of a ly fine presence, taller than his eldest brother, and ually distinguished bearing, without his brother's bilities. He had the same taste for seclusion, and almost unknown at his beautiful rectory of Birling- contented with his modest private fortune, and ding on charity the entire income of his living. After rothers had parted in 1816 at Como, a coldness had n between them, and it was only now, when the had returned to England, that they were again on old terms of mutual affection and respect.

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boyish and overcharged, the one of brutal coarseness and brutal craft, the other of the demoralization consequent upon the exercise of unlimited power. Among the feminine personages we find, as always in the work of Landor, the most beautifully conceived traits of great-hearted sweetness and devotion; varied, however, in lighter moments with others like the following:—

Any one now would say you thought me handsome,

exclaims Fiammetta to Boccaccio; a royal princess, be it remembered, to a clerkly and courtly poet. Taken as collections of separate scenes, these plays, unsatisfactory as plays, are full of fine feeling, and of solid activity and ingenuity of conception. A curious point in relation to the second of the three is that it bears in some points of plot and situation a remarkably close resemblance to a tragedy on the same subject published anonymously fifteen years before under the title of *Count Arezzi*. This piece when it appeared had by some been taken for the work of Byron, and for a few days had been on that account in much demand. Its real author had been no other than Landor's own brother Robert. When the resemblance was brought to Walter Landor's notice he seemed utterly unable to account for it, having to the best of his knowledge never either seen or heard of *Count Arezzi*. But he was subject to forgetfulness equally complete when, after the lapse of a few years, passages of his own writing were recited to him; and the impression retained by Mr. Robert Landor was that his brother must have read his play when it first appeared, and forgetting the fact afterwards, preserved portions of it in his mind by an act of purely unconscious recollection. In conduct and construction, indeed, the

plays written by Robert Landor are better than any by his illustrious brother. There was much in common between the two men. Robert Landor had nearly everything of Walter except the passionate energy of his temperament and his genius. He was an admirable scholar, and in his dramas of *Count Arezzi*, *The Earl of Brecon*, *Faith's Fraud*, and *The Ferryman*, and his didactic romances, *The Fountain of Arethusa* and the *Fawn of Sertorius*, he shows himself master of a sound English style and a pure and vigorous vein of feeling and invention. Personally, he was the prince of gentlemen; of a notably fine presence, taller than his eldest brother, and of equally distinguished bearing, without his brother's irascibilities. He had the same taste for seclusion, and lived almost unknown at his beautiful rectory of Birlingham, contented with his modest private fortune, and spending on charity the entire income of his living. After the brothers had parted in 1816 at Como, a coldness had arisen between them, and it was only now, when the elder had returned to England, that they were again on the old terms of mutual affection and respect.

Soon after this trilogy it would appear that Landor wrote the last of his complete plays, the *Siege of Ancona.* This subject, with its high-pitched heroisms, its patriotisms and invincibilities, suited Landor well, and the play, although the least noticed by his critics, is I think upon the whole his best. I do not know whether it was of these four dramas and of Count Julian in especial, or of all Landor's dramatic and quasi-dramatic writings together, that Mr. Browning was thinking when a few years later he dedicated to Landor, as "a great dramatic poet," the volume containing his own two plays of *Luria* and the *Soul's Tragedy.* The letter written by the elder poet in

acknowledgment of this tribute from the younger is so characteristic alike of his genial friendliness to his brother authors, and of the broad and manly justice of his habitual criticisms both on himself and others, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting it.

Accept my thanks for the richest of Easter offerings made to any one for many years. I staid at home last evening on purpose to read *Luria*, and if I lost any good music (as I certainly did) I was well compensated in kind. To-day I intend to devote the rainy hours entirely to *The Soul's Tragedy*. I wonder whether I shall find it as excellent as *Luria*. You have conferred too high a distinction on me in your graceful inscription. I am more of a dramatist in prose than in poetry. My imagination, like my heart, has always been with the women, I mean the young, for I cannot separate that adjective from that substantive. This has taught me above all things the immeasurable superiority of Shakespeare. His women raise him to it. I mean the *immensity* of the superiority; the superiority would exist without. I am sometimes ready to shed tears at his degradation in Comedy. I would almost have given the first joint of my fore-finger rather than he should have written, for instance, such trash as that in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. His wit is pounded, and spiced, and potted, and covered with rancidity at last. A glass of champagne at Molière's is very refreshing after this British spirit. Go on and pass *us* poor devils! If you do not go far ahead of me, I will crack my whip at you and make you spring forward So to use a phrase of Queen Elizabeth,

"Yours as you demean yourself,"

W. LANDOR.

Returning to the years 1839-42, Landor in this interval, besides his trilogy of plays, published in Mr. Forster's review, and at his request, *Criticisms* in his ripest and soundest vein, on Theocritus, Catullus, and Petrarch; and by the advice of the same friend withheld from publication a reply to an adverse review of the

Pentameron which he at the time, apparently in error, attributed to Hallam. In this reply Landor had both defended and supplemented the view of Dante which he had put forward in the Decameron, and had in his grandest manner set forth what he conceived to be the qualifications necessary for the right appreciation of that master:—

> Mr. Landor has no more questioned the sublimity or the profoundness of Dante, than his readers will question whether he or his critic is the more competent to measure them. To judge properly and comprehensively of Dante, first the poetical mind is requisite; then, patient industry in exploring the works of his contemporaries, and in going back occasionally to those volumes of the schoolmen which lie dormant in the libraries of his native city. Profitable too are excursions in Val d'Arno and Val d'Elsa, and in those deep recesses of the Apennines where the elder language is yet abiding in its rigid strength and fresh austerity. Twenty years and unbroken leisure have afforded to Mr. Landor a small portion of such advantages, at least of the latter; a thousand could pour none effectually into this *pertusum vas*.

In the three or four years following the production of these plays and criticisms, Landor was occupied almost entirely in preparing for press, with the indefatigable help of Mr. Forster, a collected edition of his writings. It was in 1846 that this edition at length appeared. It contained the whole mass of Landor's work compressed into two tall volumes in royal octavo, with the text printed in double columns; an unattractive and inconvenient arrangement. The principal novelties in the collection were, first, the supplementary *Conversations* recovered from the light-hearted custody of Mr. Willis, together with others written during the last fifteen years, forty-two in all; and next the *Hellenics;* consisting of translations into English

blank verse, undertaken in the first instance at the suggestion of Lady Blessington, of those *Idyllia* of Landor's in Latin the first edition of which had been printed at Oxford in 1814, and the second at Pisa in 1820; together with some others written originally in English. The dedications of the original *Conversations* were not reprinted, several of the patriots and liberators to whom they were addressed having in the interval precipitated themselves in Landor's esteem from the pinnacle of glory to the abyss of shame. To the two volumes was prefixed instead a brief inscription addressed in terms of grateful affection to Julius Hare and John Forster; to the latter of whom a second address in verse brought the book to a close.

So vast and so diversified a mass of energetic thinking and masterly writing it would within the compass of any other two volumes be hard to find. But one whole class of Landor's work, and his own favourite class, had found no place in them, I mean his work in Latin, and accordingly he next set about collecting, correcting, and in part rewriting his productions in that language, both prose and verse. By dint of infinite pains and zeal on his own part and on that of Mr. Forster, this final edition of his Latin writings was got through the press in 1847, in the shape of a small closely printed volume called *Poemata et Inscriptiones*. In the meantime a few lovers of poetry had been much struck by the choice and singular quality of the *Hellenics*. Landor was encouraged to reprint these poems separately, and in the course of this same year they were issued by the house of Moxon, with additions and revisions, in one of those small volumes in green cloth which the muse of Mr. Tennyson has so long made welcome and familiar to our eyes.

The massive individuality of Landor's mind was accompanied, as we have seen, by a many-sided power of historical sympathy, which made him at home not in one only but in several, and those the most dissimilar, ages of the past. The strenuous gravity and heroic independence of Puritan England had entered into his imaginative being, as well as the contented grace and harmonious self-possession of ancient Hellas. But of all things he was perhaps the most of a Greek at heart. His freedom from any tincture of mysticism, his love of unconfused shapes and outlines, his easy dismissal of the unfathomable and the unknown, and steady concentration of the mind upon the purely human facts of existence, its natural sorrows and natural consolations, all helped him to find in the life of ancient Greece a charm without alloy, and in her songs and her philosophies a beauty and a wisdom without shortcoming. Adequate scholarship, and a close literary familiarity with the Greek writers, fortified this natural sympathy with the knowledge which was wanting to Keats, whose flashes of luminous and enraptured insight into things Hellenic are for want of such knowledge lacking in coherency and in assurance. Landor on his part is without Keats's gift, the born poet's gift, of creative, untaught felicity in epithet and language ; his power over language is of another kind, more systematic, trained, and regular. But in dealing with things Hellenic Landor strikes generally with complete assurance the true imaginative note. This is equally the case whether, as in *Pericles and Aspasia*, and in his dialogues of ancient philosophers and statesmen, he makes the Greeks themselves extol the glories of their race, or whether he trusts the exposition of those glories to the mouths of modern speakers, as when Michelangelo is made to remind Vittoria Colonna

of the conquests of the race in war and art, of Salamis and the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, together:—

The conquerors of kings until then omnipotent, kings who had trampled on the towers of Babylon and had shaken the eternal sanctuaries of Thebes, the conquerors of those kings bowed their olive-crowned heads to the sceptre of Destiny, and their tears flowed profusely over the immeasurable wilderness of human woes.

Hear, again, how Alfieri is made to correct the false taste of another Italian poet in his description of Pluto, and to draw in its place the true Greek picture of that god and of his kingdom.

Does this describe the brother of Jupiter? does it not rather the devils of our carneval, than him at whose side, upon asphodel and amaranth, the sweet Persephone sits pensively contented, in that deep motionless quiet, which mortals pity and which the gods enjoy; than him who, under the umbrage of Elysium, gazes at once upon all the beauties that on earth were separated by times and countries . . Helena and Eriphyle, Polyxena and Hermione, Deidamia and Deianira, Leda and Omphale, Atalanta and Cydippe, Laodamia, with her arm around the neck of a fond youth, whom she still seems afraid of losing, and apart, the daughters of Niobe, though now in smiles, still clinging to their parent; and many thousands more, each of whom is worth the dominions, once envied, of both brothers?

Landor was a less accomplished master in verse than prose, and we hardly find in the *Hellenics* anything equal to the lovely interlinked cadences, and the assured imaginative ease and justice, of passages like this. What we do find is an extreme, sometimes an excessive, simplicity and reserve both of rhythm and language, conveying, in many instances at least, a delightful succession of classical images; images not only lucid

in themselves, but more lucidly and intelligibly connected than had been Landor's wont in his earlier narrative poetry. The *Hamadryad* and its sequel, *Acon and Rhodope*, of which no Latin original had been first composed, these with *Enallos and Cymodameia* are, I think, the choicest examples of the vein; one or two of the others, such as the *Altar of Modesty*, had better have been left in their original Latin. The gem, however, of the volume, is to my mind not any one of the mythologic tales or idyls, but the following brief, exquisitely wrought scene of household mourning. The husband, Elpenor, stands by the bedside of the wife, Artemidora, and speaks :—

"Artemidora! Gods invisible,
While thou wert lying faint along the couch,
Have tied the sandals to thy slender feet,
And stand beside thee, ready to convey
Thy weary steps where other rivers flow.
Refreshing shades will waft thy weariness
Away, and voices like thy own come near
And nearer, and solicit an embrace."
Artemidora sigh'd, and would have prest
The hand now pressing hers, but was too weak.
Iris stood over her dark hair unseen
While thus Elpenor spake. He lookt into
Eyes that had given light and life erewhile
To those above them, but now dim with tears
And wakefulness. Again he spake of joy
Eternal. At that word, that sad word, *joy*,
Faithful and fond her bosom heaved once more:
Her head fell back: and now a loud deep sob
Swell'd through the darken'd chamber; 'twas not hers.

Landor can never have seen those beautiful and characteristic works of Attic sculpture, the funeral monuments in which the death of the beloved is shadowed forth in a group representing, only with a touch of added

solemnity in the expressions, his or her preparations for departure upon an ordinary journey or an ordinary day's work. But his poem is conceived in the very spirit of those sculptures. Like all his best work, it has to be read repeatedly and slowly before it will be found to have yielded up the full depth and tenderness of its meanings. The beauty of the dying woman implied, not described; the gentle dealings with her of the unseen messenger of the gods who has placed the sandals about her feet in sleep; the solicitude of the husband, who as long as she breathes will speak to her only words of comfort; his worship, which when he would tell her of the voices that will greet her beyond the tomb, can find no words to express their sweetness except by calling them "like her own;" the pressure with which she would, but cannot, answer him; the quiver of the heart with which she expires upon the mention and the idea of joy—for what are those unknown and uncompanioned joys to her?—the bursting of the floodgates of his grief when there is no longer any reason for restraining it; these things are conceived with that depth and chastity of tenderness, that instinctive beauty in pathos, which Landor shares with none but the greatest masters of the human heart. If we are to let ourselves notice the presence of imperfections or mannerisms in so beautiful a piece of work and of feeling, it will be to point out the mode (habitual with Landor) in which the pronouns are made to do more work than they can well bear in the words "those above them;" meaning the eyes of Elpenor, now, at the moment of the description, occupying a position above those of his wife, inasmuch as she is lying on the sick-bed and he standing over her. This is an instance of Landor's habit of excessive condensation; just as the last lines contain an instance of his

habit of needlessly avoiding, in narrative, the main fact of a situation, and relating instead some result or concomitant of the situation from which the reader is required to infer its main fact for himself.

To this 1847 edition of the *Hellenics* Landor prefixed a dedication in capital letters, which is a monument at once of the magnificence of his prose style and of the sanguine political enthusiasm which remained proof in him against every disenchantment. The liberal Cardinal Mastai had just been elected Pope as Pio Nono, and for a moment the eyes of all Europe were turned in hope towards the new pontiff. To him accordingly Landor inscribed his book. After a contrast of his opportunities and his purposes with those of Louis Philippe, the inscription concludes :—

> Cunning is not wisdom; prevarication is not policy; and (novel as the notion is, it is equally true) armies are not strength: Acre and Waterloo show it, and the flames of the Kremlin and the solitudes of Fontainbleau. One honest man, one wise man, one peaceful man, commands a hundred millions, without a baton and without a charger. He wants no fortress to protect him: he stands higher than any citadel can raise him, brightly conspicuous to the most distant nations, God's servant by election, God's image by beneficence.

The events of the next few years revived in Landor all the emotions of his earlier manhood. The year 1848 seemed to him like another and more hopeful year 1821. The principles of popular government and of despotism once more encountered each other in the death-grapple. The struggle was sharper than the last had been; a greater number of tyrannies reeled and tottered, and for a longer time; but the final defeat was, at least it seemed to be, not less crushing, nor the final disappointment less com-

plete. Against the renegadoes of liberty, such as the Pope himself and Louis Napoleon, there were no bounds to Landor's indignation. By the abilities and friendliness of the latter he had been in personal intercourse at Gore House quite won, and foreseeing after the revolution of 1848 that he would soon be called to the absolute government of his country, was nevertheless inclined to believe in his integrity of purpose. But the first shot fired against republican Rome in the name of republican France and by the authority of her President "parted us," as Landor wrote "for ever," and the verses in which Landor by-and-by denounced the refusal of the right of asylum to Kossuth seem by their concentrated fire of scorn and indignation to anticipate the *Châtiments* of Victor Hugo. Kossuth, Manin, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Türr, these, and especially Kossuth, are the great heroes of Landor's admiration now. He wrote a small, now almost undiscoverable, volume of *Italics* in verse, besides several new political *Conversations;* of Garibaldi with Mazzini; of King Carlo-Alberto with the Princess Belgioioso; and others again of reactionary cardinals and ministers with each other. Even after the movement of 1848 and 1849 had been for the time being diverted or utterly suppressed, Landor continued to be much preoccupied with questions of policy and government. In 1851 he published a series of letters on priestcraft and ecclesiastical organization, entitled *Popery, British and Foreign*, and about the same time a series of ten *Letters to Cardinal Wiseman.* In 1854 the approach of the Crimean war gave rise in the old man, now in his eightieth year, to reflexions on the necessity of curbing the power of Russia; on the possibility of reconstituting the kingdom of Poland; and on the sagacity and probable achievements

of Louis Napoleon, in whom he for a short time experienced a brief return of confidence. These reflexions he cast into the shape of *Letters*, written nominally by an American travelling in England to a friend at home, and dedicated to Mr. Gladstone, with the words, "Sir, of all whom we have been trusting, you alone have never deceived us. Together with the confidence, the power of England is in your hands. May those hands, for the benefit of your country and of the world, be as strong as they are pure."

Three years later Landor addressed to Emerson a brief letter, the essence of proud urbanity and compendious force, in which he rectified several of that writer's observations concerning himself in the *English Traits*, and took occasion, amidst other strokes of the most serene autobiographical candour, to state exactly his sentiments in regard to tyrannicide. After speaking of Alfieri, Landor goes on:—

> Had he been living in these latter days, his bitterness would have overflowed not on France alone, nor Austria in addition, the two beasts that have torn Italy in pieces, and are growling over her bones; but more, and more justly, on those constitutional governments which, by abetting, have aided them in their ingressions and incursions. We English are the most censurable of all . . . . The ministers of England have signed that *Holy Alliance* which delivered every free State to the domination of arbitrary and irresponsible despots. The ministers of England have entered more recently into treaties with usurpers and assassins. And now, forsooth, it is called *assassination* to remove from the earth an assassin; the assassin of thousands; an outlaw, the subverter of his country's, and even of his own, laws. The valiant and the wise of old thought differently.

Backed by their authority, Landor goes on to contend that tyrannicide involves less misery than war, and to

acknowledge that he for one holds and ever will hold that "the removal of an evil at the least possible cost is best."

Some time before this, in 1853, two new volumes of Landor's writing had been put forth. One was simply a detached reprint of those of his imaginary conversations in which the speakers were ancient Greeks and Romans: *Conversations of the Greeks and Romans* the volume was called, and its dedication to Charles Dickens, in which he congratulates his friend above all things on his labours "in breaking up and cultivating the unreclaimed wastes of humanity," is another example of the combined warmth and heartiness of his friendships and the catholic justice of his appreciations. Landor's second volume of 1853, in appearance uniform with the last-named, was called by him *The Last Fruit off an Old Tree*. It was dedicated to the Marchese d'Azeglio, and to the title-page was prefixed that quatrain of Landor's upon his seventy-fifth birthday, which I have already quoted (p. 183). It contained eighteen new *Conversations*, most of them modern and political, besides a number of the prose pieces published during the past six years in pamphlets and newspapers. These included, besides the pieces of which mention has been made already, an evidence of Landor's undecaying feeling towards the memory of Southey, in the shape of a remonstrance addressed to Lord Brougham on the public neglect both of that memory itself, and of the person of the poet's surviving son. Of himself Landor in this letter gives the monumental and just description:—"I claim no place in the world of letters; I am alone, and will be alone, as long as I live, and after." The poetry which concludes the volume of *Last Fruit* is, Landor says, "what I wish the prose could have been, mostly panegyrical;" it consists, that is to

say, in great part, of "epistles" and other pieces addressed in the spirit of friendly discussion or more friendly praise to his comrades and juniors in the craft of letters. Last of all came five detached "scenes" in verse on the subject of the Cenci; scenes written not in rivalry, still less in any implied depreciation, of the work of Shelley, but simply taking up the theme afresh, as it were by a different handle and from a different side.

The two dramatic dialogues in *Last Fruit*,—those of Leonora di Este, the beloved of Tasso, with Tasso's confessor, and of Admiral Blake with his brother Humphrey,—are among the finest Landor ever wrote; the modern political, whether laudatory or satiric in their purport, are for the most part tedious enough. A long conversation between Landor himself and Archdeacon Hare, represented as taking place in the course of a walk at Hurstmonceaux, is the ripest and most interesting of that class which began thirty years before with the first dialogue of Johnson and Horne Tooke. The discussion turns almost entirely on technical points of English literature and the English language. In it among other things Landor resumes, defends, and illustrates those principles of spelling which he had founded long ago on analogy and on the study of the early English writers, and which he had insisted on actually putting into practice, to the distraction of his printers, in a large proportion of his published writings. Most of his readers had been accustomed to regard his usage in these matters as mere innovations dictated by arbitrary whim. Landor showed that he was guided not by whim but by principle, and denied that his changes were innovations at all. He knew that the current practice of any age in English spelling was purely a matter of accident and custom; and to the accident and custom of his own

age he refused to bow in cases where he found those of another to be preferable. He drew up lists of those words which he found habitually spelt by any of the earlier writers, from Chaucer down, in a manner more consistent with derivation, with sound, or with analogy, than by the moderns. Thus a regard to derivation made him write *exclame*, *proclame*, *strategem*, instead of exclaim, proclaim, stratagem; a regard to sound, *foren*, *sovran*, *interr*, instead of foreign, sovereign, inter; to analogy, *embassador*, or else why embassy? *receit*, or else why deceit and conceit? *grandor* or *grandour*, or else why honour, labour, and not honneur, labeur, and so on with the rest? Fidelity to the spoken sound also made Landor banish the termination *ed* from the preterites and past participles of verbs ending with sibilant, or soft labial or guttural, consonants, and write *wisht*, *dropt*, *lookt*, instead of wished, dropped, looked. In this last usage Landor was followed by the brothers Hare and by many of those on whom the Hares had influence; including, as we all know, no less a master than Mr. Tennyson. Custom, reasonable or other, has proved too strong to yield to others of Landor's proposed reforms. But for the student it is not easy to find better reading, a more instructive array of instances, or a more pointed and clenching method of presenting arguments, than are contained in his discussions on these mechanical and technical matters of language. Landor hated to be confounded with the so-called phonetic reformers of spelling, as Hartley Coleridge first, and afterwards one or two others, had confounded him. In this matter as in others he regarded himself essentially as a conservative, and all he proposed was to select for imitation and revival such portions of the practice of the best writers, from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, as seemed on

examination to be most correct and rational. From the orthography of words the discussion passes on to the words themselves, and we find Landor inveighing in his most vigorous vein against the colloquial corruptions which he conceived to be defiling every day the fountains of his mother tongue. "Humbug" was a word which he barely agreed to tolerate; for "pluck," "sham," "traps" (meaning luggage), "giant trees," "monster meetings," "palmy days," and many other phrases of contemporary slang or contemporary fine writing, he had no toleration whatever. He felt like a sentinel keeping guard over the honour and integrity of the English language. And for such a post no man was better fitted either by knowledge or reflection. So massive and minute a literary acquaintance with his mother tongue, combined with so jealous and sensitive an instinct in its verbal criticism, have probably never existed in any other man. Nor was there ever a time when a sentinel was more needed. Even men of genius and of just popularity, a Carlyle, a Dickens, a Macaulay, had each in his way accustomed the millions of English-speaking and English-reading men to find their language forced into all manner of startling or glittering usages, of extravagant or unquiet forms and devices. There were few writers, and of these Landor was the foremost, who adhered to a classical regularity of language and to a classical composure and restraint of style. Landor was rigorous in rejecting from his vocabulary all words but such as had stood the test of time. He was perhaps the most exact of all English writers in observing the laws of logical and grammatical construction. His style was not founded on that of any master, but included, both in vocabulary and in structure, the resources of all the best English prose writers, from Sir

Thomas Browne and Milton to Horace Walpole and Lord Chesterfield. He was not given, except for special purposes, to the use of strong monosyllables, or of the curt Teutonic English which has been brought into fashion in our own time, but preferred rather, though not pedantically, the polysyllabic articulation of words derived from the Latin.

In all this, however, Landor was as a voice crying in the wilderness. It is amazing now, and it was amazing then, that the grand old preacher should have so few listeners. The English-reading public had taken him at his word. They left him where he was content to remain, alone. They gave him no place in the world of letters, while they excited themselves to passion over the work of scores of lesser men. Less attention was paid to him in England than in America, where about this time, 1856, a *Selection* of detached thoughts and sentences from the *Conversations* was published at Boston, with an admirable critical introduction by Mr. Hilliard. It is incredible, but true, that within three years of the publication of the *Last Fruit* an elaborate article on English prose style, appearing in an English magazine to which Landor was himself an occasional contributor, should have actually contained no mention of his name at all. This neglect did not trouble him in the least, nor did he regard with a shadow of envy the applause bestowed on others. "Caring not a straw for popularity, and little more for fame," he simply uttered from time to time the thoughts that were in him in the language which he found most fit. From a few indeed of those who themselves stood nearest him in power and art, every such utterance as it appeared drew forth a fresh tribute of homage. In 1856 Landor published in a separate pamphlet (the "proceeds" destined,

as of old, to a specified purpose of charity), a set of *Scenes from the study;* scenes again in verse, and again drawn fearlessly from a domain where the greatest had been at work before him. The subject was Antony and Cleopatra. "What an undaunted soul before his eighty years," writes Mrs. Browning after reading them, "and how good for all other souls to contemplate." Still, in the same year, he put some of his most pregnant thoughts on language, and especially, strange as it may seem, on the English language, into a dialogue between Alfieri and Metastasio, published in *Fraser's Magazine.* "Do you think the grand old Pagan wrote that piece just now?" asks Carlyle in a letter written at the time. "The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of barbarians! The unsubduable old Roman!"

But alas! there came before long news of the old Roman which could not but make those who loved and honoured him regret that he had not succumbed earlier to the common lot. Of all Landor's wild collisions with the world of fact, the most melancholy and the most notorious befell him now in his patriarchal age. In 1856, the year of the *Letter to Emerson* and the *Scenes for the Study,* he had paid one of his now infrequent visits to London; had joined a party of friends at the Crystal Palace, and been as vigorous and as whimsical in his talk as ever. From about the beginning of the next year, 1857, there seemed to be coming over him a change for the worse. His letters bespoke both physical decay and mental disturbance. Worse followed; it was found that he had allowed himself to be dragged headlong into a miserable and compromising quarrel between two ladies at Bath. One of these was the wife of a clergyman, the other a young girl, her bosom friend until

the quarrel arose; both had been very intimate with Landor during the last few years. To the younger he, with his royal and inveterate love of giving, had lately made over a small legacy in money, which had been left him as a token of friendship by Kenyon. In the course of the quarrel the elder lady, who had shortly before accepted help from the younger out of Landor's gift, took exception to the nature of her intimacy with the giver. Landor on his part utterly lost control of himself. Regarding himself as the champion of innocent youth against an abominable combination of fraud and calumny, in the frenzy of his indignant imagination he remembered or invented all kinds of previous malpractices against the foe. He betook himself to his old insane weapons, and both in print and writing launched invectives against her in an ultra-Roman taste. He wrote odious letters to her husband. Legal steps being set on foot to restrain him, his unfailing friend Forster came down to see what could be done. By his persuasions, joined to those of Landor's own lawyers, the enraged old man was with difficulty induced to sign an apology, coupled with an undertaking not to repeat his offence. But Mr. Forster had felt, at the time when this engagement was made, that Landor could hardly be trusted to remember or observe it. Age, illness, and indignation had rendered him for the time being uncontrollable and irresponsible. For the first time in more than twenty years he proceeded to act in defiance of Mr. Forster's advice in a matter of publication. Having recovered from the hostile party in the dispute a number of scraps in verse, the least considered and least valuable that he had thrown off during recent years, he entrusted them to an Edinburgh house to be sent to press, under the plea that copies of them were abroad, and would be made

public by others if not by himself. The volume appeared early in 1858, under the title *Dry sticks, fagoted by W. S. Landor;* "by the late W. S. Landor," the old man had at first insisted that the title should run. The book was made up of the recovered scraps and epigrams in question; with a few others in Latin; besides a reprint, after an "occultation," as Landor put it, "of sixty years," of the *Poems from the Arabic and Persian;* and a number of complimentary pieces addressed by various writers to himself. Unhappily the old man had not been able to restrain himself from adding also, in defiance of his signed engagement, one or two of his worst lampoons against his enemy. The enemy seems to have been nothing loth to take advantage of the fault, and a suit for damages was immediately set on foot. Before it came on Landor had a stroke, which left him insensible for forty-eight hours, and for some weeks afterwards he hung between life and death. His extraordinary strength, however, carried him through, and he came to himself better both in body and mind after his illness. The trial was in the meantime coming on at the August assize. Practically there could be no defence; the attacks were on the face of them libellous, and Landor's friends advised him to go abroad, in order if possible to protect himself against the consequences of the inevitable verdict; first selling his personal property and pictures, and making a formal transfer of all his real property to his eldest son. This was accordingly done, and just before the trial came on the forlorn old man set out to leave his native land once more.

CHAPTER VIII.

SECOND EXILE AND LAST DAYS—HEROIC IDYLS—DEATH.
(1858—1864.)

On his way to the Continent, Landor arrived suddenly at Mr. Forster's house, where Dickens and some others were at dinner. Dickens left the table to see him, expecting naturally to find him broken and cast down. But the old man's thoughts were far away; he seemed as though no ugly or infuriating realities had any existence for him, and sat talking in his most genial vein, principally about Latin poetry. "I would not blot him out, in his tender gallantry, as he sat upon his bed at Forster's that night, for a million of wild mistakes at eighty-four years of age;" so wrote the manly-hearted and understanding witness who then saw Landor for the last time. This was on the 12th of July, 1858. The trial came on at Gloucester in the next month, and the jury brought in a verdict of 1000*l.* damages against the defendant.

Stricken but unsubdued, his strength and his intellectual faculties even in some slight degree restored, Landor had in the meantime travelled as far as Genoa, where it was his intention to take up his abode. Advice well meant but injudicious prevailed on him to change his plan. He pushed on to Fiesole, and rejoined his family in the villa which he had once loved so well, and which

it was just three and twenty years ago since he had left. At first he received some degree of contentment and even pleasure from his return to his old Italian home; and it is affecting to read the verses in which the old man's sense of dignity and high desert struggles invincibly with the consciousness of his humiliation, and he endeavours to find in the charm of his present surroundings a consolation for his late disasters:—

> If I extoll'd the virtuous and the wise,
> The brave and beautiful, and well discern'd
> Their features as they fixt their eyes on mine,
> If I have won a kindness never wooed,
> Could I foresee that . . fallen among thieves,
> Despoil'd, halt, wounded . . . tramping traffickers
> Should throw their dirt upon me, not without
> Some small sharp pebbles carefully inclosed?
> However, from one crime they are exempt;
> They do not strike a brother, striking *me*.
> This breathes o'er me a cool serenity,
> O'er me divided from old friends, in lands
> Pleasant, if aught without old friends can please,
> Where round their lowly turf-built terraces
> Grey olives twinkle in this wintery sun,
> And crimson light invests yon quarried cliff,
> And central towers from distant villas peer
> Until Arezzo's ridges intervene.

But these consolations were not destined to endure. Landor's fate had still fresh trials in reserve. The scandal of the Bath affair made some of his old friends in Florence look coldly on him, and among them the English minister, Lord Normanby. At this the old man was wounded to the quick, and if the whole case were not so deeply melancholy, we might well smile at the majestic document in which he presently relieved his feelings:—

"MY LORD,—Now I am recovering from an illness of several

months' duration, aggravated no little by your lordship's rude reception of me at the Cascine, in presence of my family and innumerable Florentines, I must remind you in the gentlest terms of the occurrence.

We are both of us old men, my lord, and are verging on decrepitude and imbecility, else my note might be more energetic. I am not inobservant of distinctions. You by the favour of a minister are Marquis of Normanby, I by the grace of God am

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

But worse than any slight inflicted by a minister were the crosses which Landor found that he had to endure at home. Time had done nothing to diminish, but rather everything to increase, the incompatibilities between himself and those of his household. By settlement, deed of gift, deed of transfer, or otherwise, Landor had now made over all his property to his wife and children; the bulk of it to his eldest son; and except for a small sum in ready money which he had brought with him, he was absolutely dependent upon his family for the means of subsistence. Doubtless he was a wilful and unmanageable inmate in the house to which he had so long been a stranger. None the less was it the obvious duty of those nearest him, and enriched at his expense, either to make his life, at whatever cost of compliance and forbearance, endurable to him under their common roof, or else to provide him with the means of living in his own way elsewhere. It seems only too certain that they made no serious or patient attempt to do the former; and the latter when Landor desired it they declined to do. Pathetic, almost tragic, was the portion of the old man in those days, a Lear who found no kindness from his own. Thrice he left the villa with the determination to live by himself in Florence; but his wish was not indulged, and

thrice he was brought back to the home which was no home for him, and where he was dealt with neither generously nor gently. The fourth time he presented himself in the house of Mr. Browning with only a few pauls in his pocket, declaring that nothing should ever induce him to return.

Mr. Browning, an interview with the family at the villa having satisfied him that reconciliation or return was indeed past question, put himself at once in communication with Mr. Forster and with Landor's brothers in England. The latter instantly undertook to supply the needs of their eldest brother during the remainder of his life. Thenceforth an income sufficient for his frugal wants was forwarded regularly for his use through the friend who had thus come forward at his need. To Mr. Browning's respectful and judicious guidance Landor showed himself docile from the first. Removed from the inflictions, real and imaginary, of his life at Fiesole, he became another man, and at times still seemed to those about him like the old Landor at his best. It was in July, 1859, that the new arrangements for his life were made. The remainder of that summer he spent at Siena, first as the guest of Mr. Story, the American sculptor and poet, next in a cottage rented for him by Mr. Browning near his own. In the autumn of the same year Landor removed to a set of apartments in the Via Nunziatina in Florence, close to the Casa Guidi, in a house kept by a former servant of Mrs. Browning's, an Englishwoman married to an Italian. Here he continued to live during the five years that yet remained to him. He was often susceptible, querulous, unreasonable, and full of imaginings. The Bath trial and its consequences pressed upon his mind with a sense of bewildering injury which at times stung him almost to

madness. The deed of transfer to his eldest son had on appeal been in so far practically set aside, that the damages awarded by the jury had after all to be paid. Landor was always scheming how he might clear his character by establishing the true facts of the case; that is to say, by repeating the self-same charges the publication of which had already cost him so much. He caused a "vindication" to be printed, and wrote pressing Mr. Forster to help him to get it made public. When his instances to this effect were received with silence or remonstrance, he imagined grievances against even that proved and devoted friend, and suspended communications with him for a time. The delay which ensued in the issue of a new edition of his *Hellenics*, prepared partly before he left England and partly while he was still at Fiesole, exasperated him much as similar delays had exasperated him of old, and led, as of old, to the burning in a moment of irritation of a quantity of literary materials that lay by him.

Notwithstanding all these private self-tormentings, and indignant lashings of the wounded lion in his retreat, he remained to his small circle of friends and visitors in Florence a figure the most venerable and the most impressive. Although weaker in all ways, he retained all his ancient distinction, and many of his ancient habits. He had found a successor to Pomero in the shape of another dog of the same breed which had been given him by Mr. Story. The name of this new pet was Giallo, and Giallo became to Landor's last days all that Pomero had been before. Landor, who in the first two or three of these years at Florence still contrived to walk to a moderate extent, became known to the new generation of Florentines as the old man with the beautiful dog, *il vecchio con quel bel canino.* He

frequented too, again, his old haunts among the picture-dealers, and bought out of his slender pittance almost as many bad pictures as of yore. The occasional society and homage of some old friends and some new prevented his life from being too solitary. The death of Mrs. Browning in 1861, and her husband's consequent departure for England, took away from him his best friends of all. He had found also a great pleasure in the society of a young American lady, Miss Kate Field, who has given us an affectionate portrait of the old man in these declining days. Almost toothless now, and partially deaf, his appearance was changed by the addition of a flowing and snow-white beard. This, every one said, made him look more like an old lion than ever, and he liked, as he had always liked, to be reminded of the resemblance. He could still be royal company when he pleased. He taught his young American friend Latin, and opened out for her with delight the still abundant treasures of his mind. His memory for new friends and for names in general, as well as for recent events, had become uncertain; but his remoter recollections, his stories, as he used to call them, "of the year one," were as vivid and full of power as ever. It produced upon his hearers an effect almost of awe to listen to this heroic survivor of another age, whose talk, during the last ministry of Lord Palmerston and on the eve of the American war of Secession, would run on things which he remembered under the first ministry of Pitt, or as a child during the American War of Independence. Garibaldi was the hero of his old age as Washington had been the hero of his youth. He followed with passionate interest the progress of Italian emancipation. He insisted one day that his watch should be pawned and the proceeds given to the fund in aid of Garibaldi's wounded. He was more in-

dignant than ever with his old acquaintance, the French Emperor, for his treacherous dealings with the Italian nation. He wrote political epigrams in English and political odes in Latin; an address in English to the Sicilians; and in far from faultless Italian a dialogue between Savonarola and the Prior of St. Mark's—the proceeds to go, as the watch had only been prevented by the care of his friends from going, for the benefit of Garibaldi's wounded.

In these days the books which the old man liked best to read were novels, and he got from the library and read with delight some of those of Trollope and of his old friend G. P. R. James, speaking and writing of the latter in particular with an extravagant partiality of praise. He would often talk of books, and of the technical matters of language and the literary art, with all his old mastery and decision. On such points he was much given to quoting the opinion of his dog Giallo. Giallo, he said, was the best of critics as well as the most delightful of companions, and it was not "I," but "Giallo and I," who paid visits or entertained views on politics and literature. Giallo was the subject of many verses, extemporary and other. "Why, Giallo," said the old man one day, "your nose is hot,

But he is foolish who supposes
Dogs are ill that have hot noses."

Here are some unpublished lines of great feeling, written on the same theme, which I find under date of Aug. 1, 1860.

Giallo! I shall not see thee dead,
Nor raise a stone above thy head,
For I shall go some years before,
Where thou wilt leap at me no more,
Nor bark, as now, to make me mind,
Asking me, am I deaf or blind:

No, Giallo, but I shall be soon,
And thou wilt scratch my turf and moan.

Humorous denunciations of modern slang and modern ill-manners formed also a considerable part of Landor's talk in these days. His own manners remained, while strength was left, as fine as ever. He was full of beautiful complimentary speeches, of quick and graceful retorts, of simple old-fashioned presents and attentions. He would always see his lady friends to the door, and help them into their carriage bare-headed. If he accompanied them, as he sometimes did, on their drives, he would always take his place on the back seat. One day they were deeply touched by his expression of a wish to drive up to the gate of the Fiesolan villa, and by the look of wistfulness which came over his noble aged face as he sat in silence, gazing at that alienated home for the last time.

His American friends before long departed too, and the old man was left with less company than ever, except that of Giallo, and of his own thoughts and memories. He continued at intervals to take pleasure in the society of Mr. Robert, now Earl, Lytton, and in that of the son of his old friend Francis Hare, to whom he had been full of kindness and of attention throughout his boyhood. Little by little the fire of life sank lower in him. He grew deafer and deafer, so that at last the visits of his old friend Kirkup, now also deaf, almost ceased to give him pleasure. He suffered more and more from cough, dizziness, and disinclination for food. He became less and less conscious of outward and present facts, or conscious of them only for moments of brief and half-bewildered awakening. His letters of these years are short, and more abrupt than ever, though each proposition they contain, no matter how trivial its subject, is generally

as vigorous and as stately in form as of old. From 1861 to 1863 Mr. Browning was Landor's principal correspondent. In the last year of his life he ceased to remember his unreasonable grievance against Mr. Forster, and wrote to him with all his old warmth and gratefulness of affection, expressly confirming, among other things, the choice by which he had long ago designated him as his biographer and literary executor.

In his inward life and the customary operations of his mind, Landor continued almost to the last to retain an astonishing and unquenchable vigour. He was continually taking up pen and paper in the old sudden way to put down fragments that he had been composing whether in verse or prose, in English or in Latin. "I am sometimes at a loss for an English word," he said to a friend about this time, "never for a Latin." Two volumes of his writing, chiefly in verse, appeared after his return to Italy. The first of these, long delayed in the press, was a second and enlarged edition of the *Hellenics* of 1847. Of the idyls contained in the earlier edition, the majority here appear again, some having been completely re-written, that is to say re-translated from the original Latin, in the interval. One or two pieces which appeared in the old volume are omitted, and among those introduced for the first time are several Greek scenes and idyls, including metrical versions of two of his former prose dialogues, *Achilles and Helena*, and *Peleus and Thetis*, and one or two pieces not belonging to the Greek cycle at all. The old dedication to Pio Nono is replaced by one to Sir William Napier, and this is followed by a graceful invocation to the Muses to "come back home"—home, that is, from less congenial haunts to the scenes and the memories of Hellas. On the whole, this edition of the

Hellenics is neither in form nor in substance an improvement of that in 1847. It was four years later that there appeared Landor's next, and last, volume, the *Heroic Idyls.* In the interval he had contributed two or three prose dialogues to the *Athenæum.* The *Heroic Idyls* is a volume entirely of verse, about four parts English and one part Latin. Besides a number of personal and occasional pieces, some written recently, and many long ago, in Landor's usual vein between epigrammatic trifling and tender gravity, there are in this volume some half-a-dozen new dialogues or dramatic scenes in verse, of which *Theseus and Hippolyta,* and the *Trial of Æschylus,* are among Landor's very best work in this kind. Here, from the dialogue of the Amazonian Queen and her Athenian vanquisher, is an example of the poetry which the old man was still capable of writing at eighty-eight:—

Theseus. My country shall be thine, and there thy state
Regal.
Hippolyta. Am I a child? give me my own,
And keep for weaker heads thy diadems.
Thermodon I shall never see again,
Brightest of rivers, into whose clear depth
My mother plunged me from her warmer breast,
And taught me early to divide the waves
With arms each day more strong, and soon to chase
And overtake the father swan, nor heed
His hoarser voice or his uplifted wing.

Let us only add from the *Herioc Idyls* a few lines of its brief preface, turned with Landor's old incomparable air of temperate and dignified self-assurance,—

He who is within two paces of his ninetieth year may sit down and make no excuses; he must be unpopular, he never tried to be much otherwise; he never contended with a contemporary, but walked alone on the far eastern uplands, meditating and remembering.

The *Heroic Idyls* appeared in the autumn of 1863, with a dedication to Mr. Edward Twisleton, to whom Landor had a few months before entrusted the manuscript of the volume to be brought home. The society of this accomplished scholar and amiable gentleman was almost the last in which Landor was able to take pleasure. From the beginning of 1864 his infirmities of all kinds increased upon him. Even after the publication of the *Heroic Idyls*, he had sent home a new batch of five short dialogues in prose and verse. But the end was now fast approaching. In the mid-spring of his eighty-ninth year, 1864, he was still able to take a momentary pleasure and interest in the visit of the young English poet, Mr. Swinburne, already the most ardent of his admirers, and soon to become the most melodious of his panegyrists, who had made a pilgrimage to Florence on purpose to see the old man's face before he died. Except for such transitory awakenings, Landor had sunk by the summer of 1864 into almost complete unconsciousness of external things. He could still call his faculties about him for a few minutes, to write fragments of verse, or short notes to Mr. Browning or Mr. Forster, but these notes are often incoherent and interrupted. During these last months his two youngest sons came down from the villa, and tended with kindness the closing hours of their father. About the middle of September the throat trouble from which he had long suffered brought on a difficulty in swallowing. He refused to take nourishment, and sank, after three days' abstinence, in a fit of coughing, on the 17th September, 1864.

And so the indomitable spirit was spent at last, and the old lion was at rest.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

"I NEVER did a single wise thing in the whole course of my existence, although I have written many which have been thought such," reflects Landor, in one of the scrawled and fugitive confessions of his last years. Landor's power lay in truth not in doing, but in thinking and saying. His strength was not in the management of life, but in the creative and critical operations of the mind. Of all men who ever lived, none furnishes a more complete type of what Mr. Matthew Arnold, in speaking of Dante, calls "the born artist, the born solitary;" the man to be judged not by his acts but by his utterances. Or if we are to judge these unpractical spirits by their acts also, by their outward as well as by their inward manifestations, then the test which we apply must be the test not of success, but of intention. It is not in their nature to be successful; it was in Landor's nature least of all. Dashed by his volcanic temperament and his blinding imagination into collision with facts, he suffered shipwreck once and again. But if we apply to his character and career the measure not of results, but of intention, we shall acknowledge in Landor a model on the heroic scale of many noble and manly virtues. He had a heart infinitely kind

and tender. His generosity was royal, delicate, never hesitating. In his pride there was no moroseness, in his independence not a shadow of jealousy. From spite, meanness, or uncharitableness he was utterly exempt. He was loyal and devoted in friendship, and what is rare, at least as prone to idealize the virtues of his friends as the vices of his enemies. Quick as was his resentment of a slight, his fiercest indignations were never those which he conceived on personal grounds, but those with which he pursued an injustice or an act of cruelty, nor is there wanting an element of nobleness and chivalry in even the wildest of his breaches with social custom. He was no less a worshipper of true greatness than he was a despiser of false. He hated nothing but tyranny and fraud, and for those his hatred was implacable. His bearing under the consequences of his own impracticability was of an admirable courage and equanimity. True, he did not learn by experience; but then neither did he repine at misfortune. Another man conscious of his intentions, and reaping the reward he reaped, would have never ceased to complain. Landor wore a brave face always, and after a catastrophe counted up, not his losses, but his consolations, his "felicities," reckoning among them even that sure symptom of a wholesome nature, the constant pleasantness of his nightly dreams. There is a boyishness about his outbreaks from first to last. At the worst, he is like a kind of gigantic and Olympian schoolboy; a nature passionate, unteachable, but withal noble, courageous, loving-hearted, bountiful, wholesome and sterling to the heart's core.

But it is the work and not the life of a man like Landor which in reality most concerns us. In his work, then, as it seems to me, Landor is a great and central

artist in his mother tongue, and a great creative master of historic sentiment and of the human heart. He is at the same time a great critic—I use the word in its natural sense, the sense in which criticism is distinguished from creation—a great critic of life; a masterly, if occasionally capricious, critic of literature; a striking, if impulsive and impetuous, critic of history and government.

The causes of his scant popularity are not difficult to discern. His thoughts were not of a nature especially to stir his own or any one time. He was indeed the son of his age in his passion for liberty, and in his spirit of humanity and tenderness for the dumb creation; and his imaginative instinct and imaginative longings in the direction of ancient Hellas were shared by the general European culture of his time. But for the rest he ranged, apart from the passions or the tempests of the hour, among the heroic figures of the past and the permanent facts and experiences of life. He "walked along the far eastern uplands, meditating and remembering;" and to the far eastern uplands those who would walk with him must brace themselves to mount. Even then, there are difficulties arising from that want of consideration and sympathy in Landor for his readers of which I have spoken. He sometimes puzzles us for want of explanations, and often fatigues us with intrusive disquisitions. These, however, are the imperfections of a great master, and the way to counteract them is by providing the student with help where help is wanted; by selection above all, and in the next place by occasional comment or introduction. A selection or golden treasury of Landor's shorter dramatic dialogues, edited with such helps for the reader as I suggest, would be, as was said long ago by Julius Hare, "one of the most beautiful books in the

language, that is to say in the world." From the longer, the discursive dialogues, perhaps the only selection possible for popular use would be one on the principle adopted by Mr. Hilliard—a selection that is, of detached sentences and sayings. These form a kind of literature in which England since the seventeenth century has not been rich; and from the conversations and other prose writings of Landor there is to be gathered such an anthology of them as the literature of France itself could hardly surpass. If indeed there is any English writer who can be compared to Pascal for power and compression, for incisive strength and imaginative breadth together, in general reflections, and for the combination of conciseness with splendour in their utterance, it is certainly Landor. Space has failed me to illustrate or do more than name this province of his genius. The true Landorian, no doubt, will prefer to dig these jewels for himself from their surroundings—surroundings sometimes attractive and sometimes the reverse; but true Landorians may at present be counted on the fingers, and I speak of what has to be done in order to extend to wider circles the knowledge of so illustrious a master.

In calling him a great artist in English letters, I refer rather to his prose than to his verse. He was equally at home, as I began by saying, in both forms, but it is in prose only that he is at his best. He had himself no illusions upon this point, and consistently declared, at least after he had applied himself to the *Imaginary Conversations*, that poetry was his amusement, prose his proper study and business. Again: "the only thing which makes me imagine that I cannot be a very bad poet, is that I never supposed myself to be a very good one." That which essentially distinguishes

poetry from prose is the presence of two inseparable elements in just proportion, emotion, and the musical regulation and control of emotion. In the poetry of Landor, the element of control is apt to be in excess; his verses are apt to be sedate to the point of tameness. As a matter of critical preference, indeed, he preferred the poetry of sobriety and restraint to the poetry of vehemence and of enthusiasm. "What is there lovely in poetry unless there be moderation and composure?" Well and good; but observing moderation and composure, it is still possible to strike and to maintain the true poetical pitch and poetical ring. Landor strikes them often, but never, as it seems to me, maintains them long. Therefore his quite short pieces, whether gay or grave, pieces that express a fancy or an emotion with neatness and precision approaching the epigrammatic, and with musical cadences of extreme simplicity, are on the whole his best. His lighter autobiographical verses of all kinds, and including those written at greater length in blank verse or eight-syllable rhymes, contain much, as the reader will have perceived by such specimens as we have been able to give, that is in a high degree dignified, interesting, and graceful. In his loftier flights Landor is admirable and disappointing by turns. In high-pitched lyrical writing he will start often with a magnificent movement,—

> Not were that submarine
> Gem-lighted city mine,—

and fall within a few lines into a prosaic sedateness both of thought and sound. In high-pitched narrative or dramatic writing he is sometimes more sustained; but when, in verse, Landor becomes sustained, he is apt also to become monotonous.

But if Landor is a poet, so far as concerns the form of his verse, only of the second order, he is unquestionably a prose writer of the very first. "Good prose," he says, "to say nothing of the original thoughts it conveys, may be infinitely varied in modulation. It is only an extension of metres, an amplification of harmonies, of which even the best and most varied poetry admits but few." Landor had too rigid and mechanical a conception of the laws of verse; in the extended metres and amplified harmonies of prose he was an extraordinary and a noble master. There was not the simplest thing but received in his manner of saying it a charm of sound as well as a natural and grave distinction of air; there was not the most stupendous in the saying of which he ever allowed himself to lose moderation or control. His passion never hurries him, in prose, into the regular beats or equi-distant accents of verse; he accumulates clause upon clause of towering eloquence, but in the last clause never fails to plant his period composedly and gracefully on its feet. His perfect instinct for the rhythms and harmonies of prose reveals itself as fully in three lines as in a hundred. It is only a great master of prose who could have written this:—

A bell warbles the more mellifluously in the air when the sound of the stroke is over, and when another swims out from underneath it, and pants upon the element that gave it birth.

Or this:

There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave: there are no voices, O Rhodopè, that are not soon mute, however tuneful: there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last.

But harmony and rhythm are only the superficial beauties of a prose style. Style itself, in the full meaning of the word, depends upon something deeper and more inward. Style means the instinctive rule, the innate principle of selection and control, by which an artist shapes and regulates every expression of his mind. Landor was in English prose an artist comparable with the highest in their respective spheres; with Milton in English verse, or with Handel in music. He was as far as possible from seeking after or recommending any of the qualities generally denoted by fine writing. So far as he sought after or recommended anything, it was the study of simplicity, parsimony, and the severest accuracy in speech. "I hate false words, and seek with care, difficulty, and moroseness, those that fit the thing." If Landor is at times a magniloquent and even a pompous writer, the reason is that his large words befit the largeness of his thoughts and images, and pomp is the natural expression of his genius. The instinct of dignity, combined with the study of simplicity and directness; natural majesty, and the absence of artificial ornament; these are the first characteristics of Landor's prose. The next are the completeness and mutual independence of its separate clauses and periods. His sentences are apt to stand alone like his ideas, and to consist either of single clauses, each giving accurate expression to a single thought, or of carefully harmonized and adjusted groups of clauses giving expression to a group of closely connected and interdependent thoughts. The best skeleton type of a Landorian paragraph is that which we quoted some pages back on Lord Byron: "I had avoided him; I had slighted him; he knew it. He did not love me; he could not." No conjunctions, no transitions; each state-

ment made by itself, and their connexion left to be discerned by the reader. If we take the most sustained examples of Landor's eloquence, we shall find in them so many amplified and enriched examples of the same method. These qualities render his prose an unrivalled vehicle for the expression of the more stable, permanent, massive order of ideas and images. But for expressing ideas of sequence, whether the sequence of propositions in an argument, or the sequence of incidents in a narrative, Landor's style is less adapted. There is a natural analogy between various manners of writing and the other arts; and the ordinary criticism on Landor, that he seems to write in marble, is true enough. Solidity, beauty and subtlety of articulation, mass with grace, and strength with delicacy, these are the qualities which he obtains to perfection, but he obtains them at the price of a certain immobility. He was probably right in believing that he had imparted to his work yet another of the qualities of marble—its imperishableness.

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